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NINETEENTH CENTURY
POETRY

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Nineteenth Century

POETRY

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A THING of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms;
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

—JOHN KEATS
From "Endymion"

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE contents of this book have been chosen by a group of British Columbia teachers, and they have been edited by a prominent member of the group for the particular use of British Columbia Schools. In stating that fact, a teacher in the Provincial University may surely be forgiven the sin of parochial pride—if such emotion be indeed sin. For the book is an outward and visible sign that our schools are attaining to mature independence and that their independence is not altogether uninformed by inward and spiritual grace. A new high school course made new text-books necessary, and this one has been designed to meet needs in the last two years of the quadrennium. Whether or not it would suit other systems in other provinces, I do not know; I believe it would. But I shall be grievously surprised if it does not prove to be an excellent book for its own particular time and place. It grows out of, and is enriched by, a great deal of local experience and tradition. Most of the poems in it have been definitely proved to be our poems, and the book as a whole is our book. If that remark moves any superior person to summon up the parallel case of Moonshine—"this thornbush (is) my thornbush; and this dog, my dog"—I am glad to have given him the suggestion. After all, as Mr. Dilworth suggests in a note, skylarks sing just as well over the Uplands of Victoria, B.C., as they ever do or did at Leghorn: the fact that a Shelley has not yet heard them there is scarcely relevant.

Of course, the editor is not for one moment making the suspicious appeal that we should at all costs patronize home industry. His work need not fear any sort of comparisons, however far-flung or however odorous. He

has chosen and arranged the poems with many different sorts of instruction in mind. If a teacher likes to have behind him the support of a historical development, he can find it here; if he wishes to study "persons" or "literary types" or the "contemporary note", he will find material to hand. Or, if he elects not to be cribbed and confined by any of these methods or considerations—since they are said to be distasteful to the "pure lover of poetry"—I think this book will allow him scope for his freedom. Mr. Dilworth's editing is the work of a scholar and a teacher. His notes are authoritative; they are ample, tho' not grown to a plurisy; and, what is even more important in a work like this, they are made for use. It will be hard to find dead wood among them. And I think it will not be easy to find, in text-books anywhere, a body of comment that better exemplifies a combination of qualities often thought to be incompatible—accuracy and warmth.

G. G. SEDGEWICK

*The University of British Columbia,
February, 1931.*

EDITOR'S NOTE

What is a Poet? He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Preface to "Lyrical Ballads"
(1800)

An accurate taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an acquired talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition.

IBID

MAY I make a brief apology for the faith that is in the lover of poetry, whether he be pupil or teacher?

It is a strange world we moderns live in. Perhaps at no time in the history of the human race have men known so many things as they do today, and yet it is true that those among us who are intellectually honest confess a great and, at times, almost overwhelming bewilderment. It is as if, in our preoccupation with Science, in the process of collecting and examining data concerning the universe and man's relation to it, we had lost our sense of the meaning and pattern which underlie all the surface phenomena of life. Humbert Wolfe has said, speaking of verse, that it "has one impulse, if a million results of that impulse, and the impulse is to smash one more fragment of shapelessness into shape, one piece more of folly and cruelty into partial sanity, one shard more of ugliness into limited beauty." If this be true, there surely has seldom been a time when men needed so much the ministry of beauty as it is revealed in poetry.

One word more, before these pages leave my hand, in justification of the title, "Selections From Nineteenth Century Poetry." The reader may ask why then include Gray, Collins, Burns? Why Walter de la Mare, Ralph Hodgson, and other poets writing today? The answer is simply this,—Art cannot be confined within temporal limits. The boundary lines of centuries mean nothing to it. Therefore, for the student who wishes to devote special attention to the thought and philosophy of poetry, it will be interesting to see some of the impulses which came to their fullest realization in the Nineteenth Century, already at work in Eighteenth Century poetry. To such a one it will be equally interesting to observe how currents of thought, given definite direction in the work of the Nineteenth Century poets, are still clearly evident in the compositions of some of our contemporaries.

One further word, and this truly the last, in acknowledgment of the great assistance and encouragement which I have received in my work on this volume. I wish to acknowledge the assistance of the members of the English Committee, Mr. C. G. Brown of South Burnaby; Mr. T. H. Calder of New Westminster; Mr. J. H. Hall of South Vancouver and Mr. E. T. Oliver of Point Grey, whose assistance in the work of selecting the poems included in this volume has been invaluable. To Mr. H. L. Smith and Mr. Walter Gage of Victoria, I owe special thanks for the patience with which they have borne my questioning and read proofs. I wish to make it perfectly clear, however, that my association of these gentlemen's names with the volume does not in any way mean that they are to assume responsibility for flawed workmanship, where such may occur, as might be the case with full collaboration. Where errors of judgment are detected the fault must be my own.

THE EDITOR

Victoria, B.C., February, 1931.

THOMAS GRAY

1716-1771

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r,
The moping owl does to the moon complain 10
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. 20

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke.
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure, 30
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th'inevitable hour:—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise. 40

Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire,
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll; 50
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little Tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood. 60

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame, 70
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires; 90
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn: 100

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

“One morn I miss’d him on the custom’d hill,
 Along the heath, and near his fav’rite tree; 110
 Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

“The next, with dirges due in sad array,
 Slow through the church-way path we saw him
 borne:—

Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
 Graved on the stone beneath yon agéd thorn.”

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
 A youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown:
 Fair Science frown’d not on his humble birth,
 And Melancholy mark’d him for her own. 120

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
 Heav’n did a recompense as largely send;
 He gave to Mis’ry all he had, a tear,
 He gain’d from Heav’n (’twas all he wish’d) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
 Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
 (There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
 The bosom of his Father and his God.

WILLIAM COLLINS

1721-1759

ODE TO EVENING

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs and dying gales;

O Nymph reserved, while now the bright-hair'd sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing, 10
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises, 'midst the twilight path
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some soften'd strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return! 20

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and Elves
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a Nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car:

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile, 30
Or upland fallows gray
Reflect its last cool gleam.

Or, if chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut
That, from the mountain's side
Views wilds and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil. 40

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While fallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves,
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes:

So long, regardless of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipp'd Health, 50
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favorite name!

ROBERT BURNS

1759-1796

TO A MOUSE

(ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH
NOVEMBER, 1785)

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

10

I doubt na, whiles, but thou mayst thief;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,
An' never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin':
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's win's ensuin'
Baith snell an' keen!

20

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste
 An' weary winter comin' fast,
 An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell,
 Till, crash! the cruel coulter past
 Out thro' thy cell.

30

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
 Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
 Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
 But house or hald,
 To thole the winter's sleety dribble
 An' cranreuch cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane
 In proving foresight may be vain:
 The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
 Gang aft a-gley,
 An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
 For promised joy.

40

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
 The present only toucheth thee:
 But, och! I backward cast my e'e,
 On prospects drear!
 An' forward, tho' I canna see,
 I guess an' fear!

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY

(ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH, IN APRIL, 1786)

Wee, modest, crimson-tippéd flower,
 Thou's met me in an evil hour;
 For I maun crush amang the stour
 Thy slender stem:

To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,
The bonie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' spreckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blithe, to greet
The purpling east.

10

Could blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

20

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

30

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet floweret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust,

Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card

Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

40

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striven,
By human pride or cunning driven
To mis'ry's brink,
Till, wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heaven,
He, ruin'd, sink!

*Dawn's life
starr*

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

50

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hings his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that;
The rank is but the guinea stamp;
The Man's the gowd for a' that!

What though on hamely fare we dine,
 Wear hodden grey, an' a' that; 10
 Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
 A Man's a Man for a' that!
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 Their tinsel show an' a' that;
 The honest Man, tho' e'er sae poor,
 Is king o' men for a' that!

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
 Wha struts, and stares, an' a' that;
 Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
 He's but a coof for a' that: 20
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 His riband, star, an' a' that;
 The Man of independent mind,
 He looks an' laughs at a' that!

A prince can mak a belted knight,
 A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
 But an honest Man's aboon his might
 Guid faith he maunna fa' that!
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 Their dignities, an' a' that, 30
 The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
 Are higher ranks than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may—
 As come it will for a' that—
 That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
 May bear the gree, an' a' that;
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 It's comin' yet for a' that,
 That Man to Man, the warld o'er,
 Shall brothers be for a' that! 40

SCOTS WHA HAE

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has often led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?—
Let him turn and flee!

10

Wha, for Scotland's King and Law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

20

Lay the proud Usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!—
Let us do or die!

THE BANKS O' DOON

Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu' o' care!
Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons through the flowering thorn.
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine; 10
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause luvver staw my rose,
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE §

1772-1834

FROST AT MIDNIGHT

The frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owlet's cry
Came loud—and hark, again! loud as before.

The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits

Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.

'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange

And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,

With all the numberless goings on of life
Inaudible as dreams! The thin blue flame

Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,

Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.

Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,

Making it a companionable form,

Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit

By its own moods interprets, every where

Echo or mirror seeking of itself,

And makes a toy of Thought.

10

20

But O! how oft,
How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
To watch that fluttering stranger! and as oft

With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang 30
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
So gazed I, till the soothing things I dreamt
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!
And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched 40
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,
Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My play-mate when we both were clothed alike?

Dear babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersed vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee, 50
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore
And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear

The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

60

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the night thatch 70
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

(1798).

oriental drama

KUBLA KHAN

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills, 10
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!

A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momentarily was forced;
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst 20
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war! 30

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played, 40
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me
That with music loud and long,

I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

50

(1798).

CHRISTABEL

PART I

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock,
Tu—whit!——Tu—whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff, which
From her kennel beneath the rock
Maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour; 10
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not overloud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull,

The night is chill, the cloud is gray: 20
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothèd knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away. 30

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell. — 40
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek —
There is not wind enough to twirl

The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can, 50
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone: 60
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandall'd were,
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she —
Beautiful exceedingly!

“Mary mother, save me now!”
(Said Christabel,) “And who art thou?” 70

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet: —
“Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:

“Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!”
Said Christabel, “How camest thou here?”
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet: —

“My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine: 80
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be; 90
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced iwis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey’s back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell —
I thought I heard, some minutes past, 100
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she,)
And help a wretched maid to flee.”

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine:
“Oh well, bright dame! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth, and friends withal,
To guide and guard you safe and free 110
Home to your noble father’s hall.”

She rose: and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
"All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth,
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me."

120

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

130

So, free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side:
"Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!"
"Alas, alas!" said Geraldine,
"I cannot speak for weariness."

140

So, free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel. 150
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will!
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye, 160
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
"Oh softly tread," said Christabel,
"My father seldom sleepeth well."

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And, jealous of the listening air,
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room, 170
As still as death, with stifled breath!
And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain, 180
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.
The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

"O weary lady, Geraldine, 190
I pray you, drink this cordial wine.
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers."

"And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?"
Christabel answered — "Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell 200
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!"
"I would," said Geraldine, "she were!"

But soon with altered voice, said she—
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!

I have power to bid thee flee."
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she, 210
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
"Alas!" said she, "this ghastly ride—
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!"
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "'Tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank: 220
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright:
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
"All they, who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befell, 230
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, "So let it be!"
And as the lady bade, did she.

Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro, 240
That vain it were her lids to close:
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest, 250
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side—
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
Oh shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied, 260
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the maiden's side!—
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah well-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
“In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!

Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
 This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow; 270
 But vainly thou warrest,
 For this is alone in
 Thy power to declare,
 That in the dim forest
 Thou heard'st a low moaning
 And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair:
 And didst bring her home with thee in love and in
 charity,
 To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

THE CONCLUSION TO PART I

It was a lovely sight to see
 The lady Christabel, when she 280
 Was praying at the old oak tree.
 Amid the jagged shadows
 Of mossy leafless boughs,
 Kneeling in the moonlight,
 To make her gentle vows;
 Her slender palms together prest,
 Heaving sometimes on her breast;
 Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
 Her face, oh call it fair not pale,
 And both blue eyes more bright than clear, 290
 Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
 Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
 Fearfully dreaming, yet iwis,
 Dreaming that alone, which is—
 O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
 The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
 And lo! the worker of these harms,

That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild, 300
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!
Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell! 310

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!
Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess, 320
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.

And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 'twere?
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call: 330
For the blue sky bends over all!

PART II

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead;
These words Sir Leoline will say,
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began,
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell, 340
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, “So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch’s lair, 350
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons’ ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t’other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borodale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud 360
That merry peal comes ringing loud;

And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.

"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied 370
The same who lay down by her side—
Oh rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet; and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts. 380
"Sure I have sinned!" said Christabel,
"Now heaven be praised if all be well!"
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet,
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown, 390
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies, 400
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame.

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above; 410
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining— 420
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between;—

But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again. 430

Oh then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side,
He would proclaim it far and wide,
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they who thus had wronged the dame,
Were base as spotted infamy!
"And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek 440
My tourney court—that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!"
He spake; his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenned
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look. 450
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,

Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)
 Again she saw that bosom old,
 Again she felt that bosom cold,
 And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
 Whereat the Knight turned wildly round, 460
 And nothing saw but his own sweet maid
 With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
 And in its stead that vision blest,
 Which comforted her after-rest
 While in the lady's arms she lay,
 Had put a rapture in her breast,
 And on her lips and o'er her eyes
 Spread smiles like light!

With new surprise,

"What ails then my beloved child?" 470
 The Baron said.—His daughter mild
 Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
 I ween, she had no power to tell
 Aught else; so mighty was the spell.

Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,
 Had deemed her sure a thing divine.
 Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
 As if she feared she had offended
 Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
 And with such lowly tones she prayed, 480
 She might be sent without delay
 Home to her father's mansion.

"Nay!"

Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
 "Ho! Bracy, the bard, the charge be thine!
 Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
 And take two steeds with trappings proud,

And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along, 490
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.

And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

“Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet
More loud than your horses' echoing feet! 500
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array,
And take thy lovely daughter home:
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array
White with their panting palfreys' foam: 510
And by mine honor! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!—
—For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine.”

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing; 520
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious hail on all bestowing!—
“Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me;
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warned by a vision in my rest! 530
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
Sir Leoline! I saw the same
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wonder'd what might ail the bird;
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the 540
old tree.

“And in my dream methought I went
To search out what might there be found;
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peered, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck, 550

Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye!

And thence I vowed this selfsame day, 560
With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
Half-listening heard him with a smile;
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said in courtly accents fine,
"Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song, 570
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!"
He kissed her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine, in maiden wise,
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turned her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast, 580
And looked askance at Christabel—
Jesu Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she looked askance!—
One moment—and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground 590
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turned round,
And like a thing that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees—no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise 600
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind;
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate!
And thus she stood in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance
With forced unconscious sympathy
Full before her father's view— 610
As far as such a look could be,
In eyes so innocent and blue!
And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly prayed:
Then falling at the Baron's feet,

“By my mother’s soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away!”
She said: and more she could not say;
For what she knew she could not tell,
O’ermastered by the mighty spell.

620

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died!
Oh by the pangs of her dear mother
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She prayed the moment ere she died:
Prayed that the babe for whom she died,
Might prove her dear lord’s joy and pride!
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline!

630

And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron’s heart and brain
If thoughts, like these, had any share,
They only swelled his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage;
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild
Dishonored thus in his old age;
Dishonored by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To the insulted daughter of his friend
By more than woman’s jealousy
Brought thus to a disgraceful end—

640

He rolled his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere—
“Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence!” The bard obeyed;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine!


650

THE CONCLUSION TO PART II

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.

660

670



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1770-1850

THE PRELUDE

(FROM BOOK I)

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:
Much favoured in my birth-place, and no less
In that belovéd Vale to which erelong
We were transplanted—there were we let loose
For sports of wider range. Ere I had told
Ten birth-days, when among the mountain slopes
Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped
The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung 10
To range the open heights where woodcocks run
Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,
Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
That anxious visitation;—moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,
And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befell
In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
Which was the captive of another's toil 20
Became my prey; and when the deed was done
I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

Nor less when spring had warmed the cultured Vale,
 Moved we as plunderers where the mother-bird
 Had in high places built her lodge; though mean
 Our object and inglorious, yet the end
 Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung 30
 Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
 And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
 But ill sustained, and almost (so it seemed)
 Suspended by the blast that blew amain,
 Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time
 While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
 With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
 Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky
 Of earth—and with what motion moved the clouds!

[Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows 40
 Like harmony in music; there is a dark
 Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
 Discordant elements, makes them cling together
 In one society. How strange that all
 The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
 Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
 Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,
 And that a needful part, in making up
 The calm existence that is mine when I
 Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!] 50

Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ;
 Whether her fearless visitings, or those
 That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light *Simila*
 Opening the peaceful clouds; or she may use
 Severer interventions, ministry
 More palpable, as best might suit her aim.

One summer evening (led by her) I found
A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in 60
Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge, 70
The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
She was an elfin pinnace; lustily
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
Went heaving through the water like a swan;
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct,
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again, 80
And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. | With trembling oars I turned,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow tree;
There in her mooring-place I left my bark,—
And through the meadows homeward went, in grave

And serious mood; but after I had seen 90
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams. 100

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,
That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! Not in vain
By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things—
With life and nature—purifying thus 110
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valley made
A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods,
At noon and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake, 120
Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine;

Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us—for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud 130
The village clock tolled six,—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud; 140
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star 150
That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still

The rapid line of motion, then at once
 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
 Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
 Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
 With visible motion her diurnal round! 160
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
 Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.
 (1799-1802).

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON
 REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR,
 JULY 13, 1798

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
 Of five long winters! and again I hear
 These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
 With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
 That on a wild secluded scene impress
 Thoughts of more deep seclusion, and connect
 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
 The day is come when I again repose
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view 10
 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
 Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
 Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
 These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
 Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
 Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem

Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods, 20
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

Those beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart; 30

And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. [Nor less, I trust,

To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world, 40

Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.] 50

If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—

In darkness and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
 O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
 How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
 With many recognitions dim and faint, 61
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
 The picture of the mind revives again:
 While here I stand, not only with the sense
 Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
 That in this moment there is life and food
 For future years. And so I dare to hope,
 Though, changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
 I came among these hills; when like a roe
 I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides 70
 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
 Wherever nature led; more like a man
 Flying from something that he dreads, than one
 Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
 (The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
 And their glad animal movements all gone by)
 To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
 What then I was. The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood, 80
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me
 An appetite; a feeling and a love,
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, nor any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye).—That time is past,

And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned 90
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. [And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air, 100
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.] Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense, 110
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,

My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read 120
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed 130
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years, 140
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear 150
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams

Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. (Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs, 160
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!
(1789).

LUCY POEMS

“SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS.”

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be; 10
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

(1799).

Jones Melancholy

"I TRAVELLED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN."

I travelled among unknown men,
 In lands beyond the sea;
 Nor, England! did I know till then
 What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
 Nor will I quit thy shore
 A second time; for still I seem
 To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
 The joy of my desire;
 And she I cherished turned her wheel
 Beside an English fire.

10

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
 The bowers where Lucy played;
 And thine too is the last green field
 That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

(1799).

"THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER."

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
 Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
 On earth was never sown;
 This Child I to myself will take,
 She shall be mine, and I will make
 A Lady of my own.

Myself will to my darling be
 Both law and impulse: and with me
 The Girl, in rock and plain,
 In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
 Shall feel an overseeing power
 To kindle or restrain.

10

She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

20

The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

30

And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

40

(1799).

"A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL."

A slumber did my spirit seal;
 I had no human fears:
 She seemed a thing that could not feel
 The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
 She neither hears nor sees;
 Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
 With rocks, and stones, and trees.

(1799).

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
 Yon solitary Highland Lass!
 Reaping and singing by herself;
 Stop here, or gently pass!
 Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
 And sings a melancholy strain;
 O listen! for the Vale profound
 Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
 More welcome notes to weary bands
 Of travellers in some shady haunt,
 Among Arabian sands:
 A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
 In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
 Breaking the silence of the seas
 Among the farthest Hebrides.

10

Will no one tell me what she sings!—
 Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
 For old, unhappy, far-off things,
 And battles long ago:

20

Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

30

(1803).

THE DAFFODILS

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

10

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:

I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,

20

Subjective

{ They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;

And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

(1804).

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years:
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail; 10
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes.

(1797).

TO A SKYLARK

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
 Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
 Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
 Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
 Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
 Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
 A privacy of glorious light is thine;
 Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
 Of harmony, with instinct more divine:

10

Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
 True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

(1825).

ELEGIAC STANZAS

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE IN A STORM,

PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile!
 Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
 I saw thee every day; and all the while
 Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
 So like, so very like, was day to day!
 Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
 It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! It seemed no sleep;
 No mood, which season takes away, or brings; 10
 I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
 Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah! THEN,—if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile,
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

20

Thou should'st have seemed a treasure-house divine
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;—
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have made: 30
And seen the soul of truth in every part,
A steadfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more;
I have submitted to a new control:
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humanized my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene. 40

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the
Friend,

If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

Oh! 'tis a passionate work—yet wise and well,
Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves, 50
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn. 60

(1805).

COMPOSED ON THE BEACH NEAR CALAIS

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free, a
The holy time is quiet as a Nun b
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun b
Is sinking down in its tranquillity; c
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea: a
Listen! the mighty Being is awake, d

And doth with his eternal motion make *d*
 A sound like thunder—everlastingly.—
 Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
 If thou appear untouched by solemn thought, 10
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
 And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it not.
 (1802).

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

The world is too much with us: late and soon, *a*
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers: *b*
 Little we see in Nature that is ours; *check b*
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon! *a*
 This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon; *a*
 The winds that will be howling at all hours, *b*
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers; *b*
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune; *c*
 It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be *d*
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn; 10
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea, *d*
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn; *e*
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea; *d*
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn. *e*
 (1806).

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE SEPTEMBER 3, 1802.

Earth has not any thing to show more fair: *a*
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by *b*
 A sight so touching in its majesty: *b*

This City now doth, like a garment, wear *a*
 The beauty of the morning; silent, bare, *a*
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie *b*
 Open unto the fields, and to the sky, *b*
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air. *a*
 Never did sun more beautifully steep *c*
 In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill; *d* 10
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep! *c*
 The river glideth at his own sweet will: *d*
 Dear God! the very houses seem asleep; *c*
 And all that mighty heart is lying still! *d*

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea, *a*
 One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice: *b*
 In both from age to age thou didst rejoice, *b*
 They were thy chosen music, Liberty! *a*
 There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee *a*
 Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven: *c*
 Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven, *c*
 Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee. *a*
 Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft: *d*
 Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left; *d* 10
 For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be *a*
 That Mountain floods should thunder as before, *c*
 And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore, *c*
 And neither awful Voice be heard by thee! *a*

The Sonnet -

(1807).

*"The noblest piece of verbal
architecture that the mind
of man has conceived"*

LORD BYRON

1788-1824

LACHIN Y GAIR

Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses!

In you let the minions of luxury rove;

Restore me the rocks where the snow-flake reposes,

Though still they are sacred to freedom and love:

Yet, Caledonia, beloved are thy mountains,

Round their white summits though elements war;

Though cataracts foam 'stead of smooth-flowing fountains,

I sigh for the valley of dark Loch na Garr.

Ah! there my young footsteps in infancy wander'd;

My cap was the bonnet, my cloak was the plaid; 10

On chieftains long perish'd my memory ponder'd,

As daily I strode through the pine-cover'd glade;

I sought not my home till the day's dying glory

Gave place to the rays of the bright polar star;

For fancy was cheer'd by traditional story,

Disclosed by the natives of dark Loch na Garr.

"Shades of the dead! have I not heard your voices

Rise on the night-rolling breath of the gale!"

Surely the soul of the hero rejoices,

And rides on the wind, o'er his own Highland vale. 20

Round Loch na Garr while the stormy mist gathers,

Winter presides in his cold icy car:

Clouds there encircle the forms of my fathers;

They dwell in the tempests of dark Loch na Garr.

"Ill-starr'd, though brave, did no visions foreboding

Tell you that fate had forsaken your cause?"

Ah, were you destined to die at Culloden,
 Victory crown'd not your fall with applause:
 Still were you happy in death's earthy slumber,
 You rest with your clan in the caves of Braemar; 30
 The pibroch resounds, to the piper's loud number,
 Your deeds on the echoes of dark Loch na Garr.

Years have roll'd on, Loch na Garr, since I left you,
 Years must elapse ere I tread you again:
 Nature of verdure and flowers has bereft you,
 Yet still are you dearer than Albion's plain.
 England! thy beauties are tame and domestic
 To one who has roved on the mountains afar:
 Oh for the crags that are wild and majestic!
 The steep frowning glories of dark Loch na Garr! 40
 (1806).

"THE ISLES OF GREECE"

SONG FROM "DON JUAN", CANTO III

The isles of Greece! the isles of Greece!
 Where burning Sappho lov'd and sung,
 Where grew the arts of war and peace,
 Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!
 Eternal summer gilds them yet,
 But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,
 The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
 Have found the fame your shores refuse;
 Their place of birth alone is mute 10
 To sounds which echo further west
 Than your sires' "Islands of the Blest."

The mountains look on Marathon
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis; 20
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations;—all were his!
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set, where were they?

And where are they? and where art thou
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine? 30

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
Must *we* but blush?—Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead! 40
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, "Let one living head,
But one, arise,—we come, we come!"
'Tis but the living who are dumb.

In vain—in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine! 50
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet;
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave? 60

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend 70
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!

On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line

Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—

They have a king who buys and sells: 80
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells;
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!

Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves. 90

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,

Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;

There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

(1819).

"THE EVE OF WATERLOO"

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE", CANTO III

XXI.

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then

Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
 The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
 A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
 Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
 Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
 And all went merry as a marriage bell;
 But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

XXII.

Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the wind, 10
 Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
 On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
 No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
 To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet.—
 But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
 As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
 And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
 Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

XXIII.

Within a window's niche of that high hall
 Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear 20
 That sound, the first amidst the festival,
 And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
 And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,
 His heart more truly knew that peal too well
 Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier,
 And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:
 He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

XXIV.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
 And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
 And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago 30
 Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;
 And there were sudden partings, such as press

The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
 Which ne'er might be repeated: who could guess
 If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
 Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

XXV.

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
 The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
 Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
 And swiftly forming in the ranks of war; 40
 And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
 And near, the beat of the alarming drum
 Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
 While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,
 Or whispering, with white lips—"The foe! They come!
 they come!"

XXVI.

And wild and high the "Cameron's gathering" rose,
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
 Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes:
 How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills
 Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills 50
 Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
 With the fierce native daring which instils
 The stirring memory of a thousand years,
 And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears!

XXVII.

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
 Dewy with Nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
 Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
 Over the unreturning brave,—alas!
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
 Which now beneath them, but above shall grow 60
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass

Of living valour, rolling on the foe,
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

XXVIII.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day
Battle's magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is covered thick with other clay, 70
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent!

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CANTO IV

I.

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand:
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Look'd to the wingéd Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

II.

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean, 10
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers:
And such she was;—her daughters had their dowers

From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
 Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers;
 In purple was she robed, and of her feast
 Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increased.

III.

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
 And silent rows the songless gondolier; 20
 Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
 And music meets not always now the ear:
 Those days are gone—but Beauty still is here.
 States fall, arts fade—but Nature doth not die,
 Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
 The pleasant place of all festivity,
 The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!

IV.

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
 Her name in story, and her long array
 Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond 30
 Above the dogeless city's vanish'd sway;
 Ours is a trophy which will not decay
 With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
 And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn away—
 The keystones of the arch!—though all were o'er,
 For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

* * *

XI.

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;
 And, annual marriage now no more renew'd,
 The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored, 40
 Neglected garment of her widowhood!
 St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood
 Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd power,
 Over the proud Place where an Emperor sued,

And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour
When Venice was a queen with an unequall'd dower.

XII.

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns—
An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt;
Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
Clank over sceptred cities; nations melt
From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt 50
The sunshine for a while, and downward go
Like lauwine loosen'd from the mountain's belt;
Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo,
Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe!

XIII.

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun;
But is not Doria's menace come to pass?
Are they not *bridled*?—Venice, lost and won,
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
Sinks, like a seaweed, into whence she rose! 60
Better be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun,
Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

* * *

XXVII.

The moon is up, and yet it is not night;
Sunset divides the sky with her; a sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine height
Of blue Friuli's mountains; Heaven is free
From clouds, but of all colours seems to be,—
Melted to one vast Iris of the West,—
Where the Day joins the past Eternity, 70
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
Floats through the azure air, an island of the blest!

XXVIII.

A single star is at her side, and reigns
 With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still
 Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains
 Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,
 As Day and Night contending were, until
 Nature reclaim'd her order:—gently flows
 The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil
 The odorous purple of a new-born rose, 80
 Which streams upon her stream, and glass'd within
 it glows,

XXIX.

Fill'd with the face of heaven, which, from afar,
 Comes down upon the waters; all its hues,
 From the rich sunset to the rising star,
 Their magical variety diffuse:
 And now they change; a paler shadow strews
 Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting day
 Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
 With a new colour as it gasps away,
 The last still loveliest—till—'tis gone—and all is gray. 90

* * *

XLII.

Italia! oh Italia! thou who hast
 The fatal gift of beauty, which became
 A funeral dower of present woes and past,
 On thy sweet brow is sorrow plough'd by shame,
 And annals graved in characters of flame.
 Oh, God! that thou wert in thy nakedness
 Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim
 Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press
 To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of thy distress;

XLIH.

Then might'st thou more appal; or, less desired, 100
Be homely and be peaceful, undeplord
For thy destructive charms; then, still untired,
Would not be seen the armèd torrents pour'd
Down the deep Alps; nor would the hostile horde
Of many-nation'd spoilers from the Po
Quaff blood and water; nor the stranger's sword
Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so,
Victor or vanquish'd, thou the slave of friend or foe.

* * *

XLVII.

Yet, Italy! through every other land
Thy wrongs should ring, and shall, from side to side; 110
Mother of Arts! as once of arms, thy hand
Was then our guardian, and is still our guide;
Parent of our religion, whom the wide
Nations have knelt to for the keys of heaven!
Europe, repentant of her parricide,
Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward driven,
Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven.

XLVIII.

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
Where the Etrurian Athens claims and keeps
A softer feeling for her fairy halls. 120
Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
Her corn, and wine, and oil, and Plenty leaps
To laughing life, with her redundant horn.
Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps
Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
And buried Learning rose, redeem'd to a new morn.

* * *

LIV.

In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
 Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
 Even in itself an immortality,
 Though there were nothing save the past, and this, 130
 The particle of those sublimities
 Which have relapsed to chaos; here repose
 Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
 The starry Galileo, with his woes;
 Here Machiavelli's earth return'd to whence it rose.

LV.

These are four minds, which, like the elements,
 Might furnish forth creation.—Italy!
 Time, which hath wrong'd thee with ten thousand rents
 Of thine imperial garment, shall deny,
 And hath denied, to every other sky, 140
 Spirits which soar from ruin:—thy decay
 Is still impregnate with divinity,
 Which gilds it with revivifying ray;
 Such as the great of yore, Canova is to-day.

LVI.

But where repose the all Etruscan three—
 Dante, and Petrarch, and, scarce less than they,
 The Bard of Prose, creative spirit, he
 Of the Hundred Tales of love—where did they lay
 Their bones, distinguish'd from our common clay
 In death as life? Are they resolved to dust, 150
 And have their country's marbles nought to say?
 Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust?
 Did they not to her breast their filial earth intrust?

LVII.

Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar,
 Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore:

Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
 Proscribed the bard whose name for evermore
 Their children's children would in vain adore
 With the remorse of ages; and the crown
 Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore, 160
 Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,
 His life, his fame, his grave, though rifled—not thine own.

LVIII.

Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeath'd
 His dust,—and lies it not her great among,
 With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed
 O'er him who form'd the Tuscan's siren tongue?
 That music in itself, whose sounds are song,
 The poetry of speech? No;—even his tomb
 Uptorn, must bear the hyæna bigot's wrong,
 No more amidst the meaner dead find room, 170
 Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for *whom*!

LIX.

And Santa Croce wants their mighty dust,—
 Yet for this want more noted, as of yore
 The Caesar's pageant, shorn of Brutus' bust,
 Did but of Rome's best Son remind her more:
 Happier Ravenna! on thy hoary shore,
 Fortress of falling empire! honour'd sleeps
 The immortal exile;—Arqua, too, her store
 Of tuneful relics proudly claims and keeps, 179
 While Florence vainly begs her banish'd dead and weeps.

* * *

LXXVIII.

Oh Rome, my country! city of the soul!
 The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,

Lone mother of dead empires! and control
 In their shut breasts their petty misery.
 What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
 The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
 O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye,
 Whose agonies are evils of a day—
 A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

LXXIX.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands, 190
 Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
 An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
 Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago;
 The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
 The very sepulchres lie tenantless
 Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
 Old Tiber, through a marble wilderness?
 Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

* * *

CXXVIII.

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
 Collecting the chief trophies of her line, 200
 Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
 Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine
 As 'twere its natural torches, for divine
 Should be the light which streams here to illumine
 This long-explored but still exhaustless mine
 Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
 Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

CXXIX.

Hues which have words, and speak to ye of heaven,
 Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
 And shadows forth its glory. There is given 210

Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,
A spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
And magic in the ruin'd battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower.

CXXX.

Oh Time! the beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin, comforter
And only healer when the heart hath bled;
Time! the corrector where our judgments err, 220
The test of truth, love—sole philosopher,
For all beside are sophists—from thy thrift,
Which never loses though it doth defer—
Time, the avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift:

CXXXI.

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine
And temple more divinely desolate,
Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
Ruins of years, though few, yet full of fate:
If thou hast ever seen me too elate, 230
Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne
Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
Which shall not whelm me, let me not have worn
This iron in my soul in vain—shall they not mourn?

* * *

CXLII.

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;

Here, where the Roman million's blame or praise
 Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd, 240
 My voice sounds much—and fall the stars' faint rays
 On the arena void—seats crush'd—walls bow'd—
 And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

CXLIII.

A ruin—yet what ruin! from its mass
 Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd;
 Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
 And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.
 Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd?
 Alas! developed, opens the decay,
 When the colossal fabric's form is near'd: 250
 It will not bear the brightness of the day,
 Which streams too much on all years, man, have reft away.

CXLIV.

But when the rising moon begins to climb
 Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there;
 When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
 And the low night-breeze waves along the air
 The garland-forest, which the gray walls wear,
 Like laurels on the bald first Caesar's head;
 When the light shines serene but doth not glare,
 Then in this magic circle raise the dead: 260
 Heroes have trod this spot—'tis on their dust ye tread.

* * *

CLXXVIII.

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
 There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
 There is society, where none intrudes,
 By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
 I love not Man the less, but Nature more,

From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal. 270

CLXXIX.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

CLXXX.

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields 280
Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth:—there let him lay.

CLXXXI.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake, 290
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war—
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,

They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar.

CLXXXII.

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they? 299
Thy waters wash'd them power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so thou;—
Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves' play,
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow:
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

CLXXXIII.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,—
Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime 310
Dark-heaving—boundless, endless, and sublime,
The image of eternity, the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.
(1812).

JOHN KEATS

1795-1812

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken; 10
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

(1816).

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

A BALLAD

I.

“O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

II.

“O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?

The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

III.

"I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew, 10
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too."

IV.

"I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

V.

"I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan. 20

VI.

"I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

VII.

"She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
'I love thee true.'

VIII.

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sigh'd full sore, 30
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

IX.

"And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

*Song
Lyric sonnet
Ode.*

X.

"I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!"

40

XI.

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

XII.

"And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing."

(1819).

written to a person

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? what maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy? 10

*perfect bit of
endured many
centuries*

*two most beautiful
parts of
Greece*

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair! 20

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new;
 More happy love! more happy, happy love!
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting and for ever young;
 All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue. 30

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
 What little town by river or sea-shore,
 Or mountain built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return. 40
green pretty form
 O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,

With forest branches and the trodden weed;
 Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!

When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know. 50
 (1819).

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thy happiness,—

That thou, light-wingéd Dryad of the trees,
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease. 10

O, for a draught of vintage, that hath been
 Cool'd a long age in the deep-delvéd earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South,
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
 And purple-stainéd mouth;
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim: 20

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs,
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow. 30

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy, *higher imagination*
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
 Already with thee! tender is the night,
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
 Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown 39
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
 But, in embalm'd darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
 Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
 And mid-May's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. 50

perfect
in the dark
 Darkling I listen; and for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death, *alcohol*

Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. 70

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fabled to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—do I wake or sleep? 80

(1819).

ODE TO AUTUMN

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
 To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease, 10
 For Summer has o'erbrimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
 Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
 Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
 Steady thy laden head across a brook; 20
 Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too—
 While barr'd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river shallows, borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn; 30
 Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft

The redbreast whistles from a garden croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.
(1819).

STANZAS

In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember
Their green felicity:
The north cannot undo them
With a sleety whistle through them,
Nor frozen thawings glue them
From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy brook,
Thy bubblings ne'er remember
Apollo's summer look;
But, with a sweet forgetting,
They stay their crystal fretting,
Never, never petting
About the frozen time.

10

Ah, would 'twere so with many
A gentle girl and boy!
But were there ever any
Writhed not at passèd joy?
To know the change and feel it,
When there is none to heal it,
Nor numbèd sense to steel it,
Was never said in rhyme.

20

BRIGHT STAR

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art—

Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,

Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task

Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask

Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,

Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast, 10
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,

Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1792-1822

OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveller from an antique land

Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,

Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read

Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:

'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Looks on my works, ye mighty, and despair!'

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

(1813).

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION NEAR NAPLES

The sun is warm, the sky is clear,

The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear

The purple noon's transparent might,

The breath of the moist earth is light

Around its unexpanded buds;

Like many a voice of one delight,

The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's.

I see the deep's untrampled floor 10
With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved, in star-showers thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone;
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around, 20
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;—
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child, 30
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,

Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan; 40
They might lament—for I am one
Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.
(1818).

TO A SKYLARK

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest. 10

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightening,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight, 20

Keen as are the arrows
 Of that silver sphere,
 Whose intense lamp narrows
 In the white dawn clear,
 Until we hardly see, we feel, that it is there.

All the earth and air
 With thy voice is loud,
 As, when night is bare,
 From one lonely cloud
 The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed. 30

What thou art we know not;
 What is most like thee?
 From rainbow clouds there flow not
 Drops so bright to see,
 As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
 In the light of thought,
 Singing hymns unbidden,
 Till the world is wrought
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not: 40

Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour
 With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbeholden
 Its aërial hue
 Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the
 view: 50

Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered,
 Till the scent it gives
 Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged
 thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
 Rain-awakened flowers,—
 All that ever was
 Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass. 60

Teach us, sprite or bird,
 What sweet thoughts are thine:
 I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine
 That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymenæal,
 Or triumphal chaunt,
 Matched with thine, would be all
 But an empty vaunt,
 A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want. 70

What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain?
 What fields, or waves, or mountains
 What shapes of sky or plain?
 What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
 Languor cannot be:
 Shadow of annoyance
 Never came near thee:
 Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety. 80

phonetic

x amphitruon

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?
We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought. 90

Yet, if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.
Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground! 100
Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.
(1820).

THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.

From my wings are shaken the dewes that waken
 The sweet buds every one,
 When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
 As she dances about the sun.

① I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
 And whiten the green plains under, 10
 And then again I dissolve it in rain,
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

② I sift the snow on the mountains below,
 And their great pines groan aghast;
 ③ And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
 Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
 Lightning my pilot sits,
 In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
 It struggles and howls at fits: 20
 Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
 This pilot is guiding me,
 Lured by the love of the genii that move
 In the depths of the purple sea;
 Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
 Over the lakes and the plains,
 Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
 The Spirit he loves remains;
 And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
 Whilst he is dissolving in rains. 30

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes, ④
 And his burning plumes outspread,
 Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
 When the morning star shines dead:
 As on the jag of a mountain crag,
 Which an earthquake rocks and swings,

An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And, when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love, 40
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet, 50
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl; 60
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march,
With hurricane, fire, and snow,

When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow; 70
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky:
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air, 80
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

(1820).

ARETHUSA

Arethusa arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains,—
From cloud and from crag,
With many a jag,
Shepherding her bright fountains.
She leapt down the rocks,
With her rainbow locks
Streaming among the streams;—
Her steps paved with green 10
The downward ravine
Which slopes to the western gleams;
And gliding and springing

She went, ever singing,
In murmurs as soft as sleep;
The Earth seemed to love her,
And Heaven smiled above her,
As she lingered towards the deep.

Then Alpheus bold,
On his glacier cold, 20
With his trident the mountain strook
And opened a chasm
In the rocks;—with the spasm
All Erymanthus shook.

And the black south wind
It concealed behind
The urns of the silent snow,
And earthquake and thunder
Did rend in sunder
The bars of the springs below. 30
The beard and the hair
Of the River-god were
Seen through the torrent's sweep,
As he followed the light
Of the fleet nymph's flight
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

“Oh save me! Oh guide me!
And bid the deep hide me,
For he grasps me now by the hair!”
The loud Ocean heard, 40
To its blue depth stirred,
And divided at her prayer;
And under the water—
The Earth's white daughter
Fled like a sunny beam;

Behind her descended
Her billows, unblended
With the brackish Dorian stream:—
Like a gloomy stain
On the emerald main

50

Alpheus rushed behind,—
As an eagle pursuing
A dove to its ruin
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

Under the bowers
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearlèd thrones,
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods,
Over heaps of unvalued stones;
Through the dim beams
Which amid the streams
Weave a network of coloured light;
And under the caves,
Where the shadowy waves
Are as green as the forest's night:—
Outspeeding the shark,
And the sword-fish dark,
Under the ocean foam,
And up through the rifts
Of the mountain clifts
They passed to their Dorian home.

60

70

And now from their fountains
In Enna's mountains,
Down one vale where the morning basks,
Like friends once parted
Grown single-hearted,

They ply their watery tasks.
 At sunrise they leap
 From their cradles steep
 In the cave of the shelving hill;
 At noontide they flow
 Through the woods below
 And the meadows of asphodel;
 And at night they sleep
 In the rocking deep
 Beneath the Ortygian shore,—
 Like spirits that lie
 In the azure sky,
 When they love but live no more.

80

90

(1820).

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

I.

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
 Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O, thou,
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until
 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
 With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit which art moving everywhere;
 Destroyer and preserver; hear, O, hear!

10



II.

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head 20

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst: O, hear!

III.

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, 30
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know 40

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O, hear!

IV.

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
 The impulse of thy strength, only less free
 Than thou, O uncontrollable! if even
 I were as in my boyhood, and could be
 The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
 As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed 50
 Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven
 As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
 Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
 I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
 A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
 One too like thee—tameless, and swift, and proud.

V.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
 What if my leaves are falling like its own!
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
 Will take from both a deep autumnal tone, 60
 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
 My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
 Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
 Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
 And, by the incantation of this verse,
 Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth
 The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? 70

(1819).

CHORUSES FROM "HELLAS"

In the great morning of the world,
The spirit of God with might unfurled
The flag of Freedom over Chaos,
And all its banded anarchs fled,
Like vultures frightened from Imaus,
Before an earthquake's tread.—
So from Time's tempestuous dawn
Freedom's splendour burst and shone:—
Thermopylae and Marathon

Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,
The springing fire.—The wingèd glory
On Philippi half alighted,

Like an eagle on a promontory.
Its unwearied wings could fan
The quenchless ashes of Milan.
From age to age, from man to man,
It lived; and lit from land to land,
Florence, Albion, Switzerland.

Then night fell; and, as from night,
Re-assuming fiery flight,
From the West swift freedom came,
Against the course of Heaven and doom,
A second sun arrayed in flame,
To burn, to kindle, to illume.

From far Atlantis its young beams
Chased the shadows and the dreams.
France, with all her sanguine steams,
Hid, but quenched it not; again
Through clouds its shafts of glory rain
From utmost Germany to Spain.

10

20

30



As an eagle fed with morning
 Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,
 When she seeks her aërie hanging
 In the mountain-cedar's hair,
 And her brood expect the clanging
 Of her wings through the wild air,
 Sick with famine:—Freedom so
 To what of Greece remaineth now
 Returns; her hoary ruins glow
 Like Orient mountains lost in day;
 Beneath the safety of her wings
 Her renovated nurslings prey,
 And in the naked lightnings
 Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.
 Let Freedom leave—where'er she flies,
 A desert, or a paradise;
 Let the beautiful and the brave
 Share her glory, or a grave.

40

* * * * *

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
 From creation to decay,
 Like the bubbles on a river
 Sparkling, bursting, borne away.
 But they are still immortal
 Who, through birth's orient portal
 And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
 Clothe their unceasing flight
 In the brief dust and light
 Gathered around their chariots as they go:
 New shapes they still may weave,
 New gods, new laws, receive,
 Bright or dim are they as the robes they last
 On Death's bare ribs had cast.

50

60

A Power from the unknown God,
A Promethean conqueror came;
Like a triumphal path he trod
The thorns of death and shame.
A mortal shape to him
Was like the vapour dim
Which the orient planet animates with light;
Hell, Sin, and Slavery, came, 70
Like bloodhounds mild and tame,
Nor preyed, until their Lord had taken flight.
The moon of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set:
While, blazoned as on heaven's immortal noon
The cross leads generations on.
Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep
From one whose dreams are Paradise
Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,
And Day peeps forth with her blank eyes; 80
So fleet, so faint, so fair,
The Powers of earth and air
Fled from the folding-star of Bethlehem:
Apollo, Pan, and Love,
And even Olympian Jove,
Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them;
Our hills and seas and streams,
Dispeopled of their dreams,
Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,
Wailed for the golden years. 90

* * * * *

The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn:

Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far;
A new Peneus rolls his fountains
Against the morning star. 100
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
Fraught with a later prize;
Another Orpheus sings again,
And loves, and weeps, and dies.
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.

O, write no more the tale of Troy,
If earth Death's scroll must be! 110
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
Which dawns upon the free:
Although a subtler Sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
And to remoter time
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
The splendour of its prime;
And leave, if nought so bright may live,
All earth can take or Heaven can give. 120

Saturn and Love their long repose
Shall burst, more bright and good
Than all who fell, than One who rose,
Than many unsubdued:

Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
But votive tears and symbol flowers.

O cease! must hate and death return?

Cease! must men kill and die?

Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn

Of bitter prophecy.

130

The world is weary of the past,

Oh might it die or rest at last!

(1821).

TO NIGHT

Swiftly walk over the western wave,

Spirit of Night!

Out of the misty eastern cave,—

Where, all the long and lone daylight,

Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear

Which make thee terrible and dear,—

Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,

Star-inwrought,

Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;

Kiss her until she be wearied out,

Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,

Touching all with thine opiate wand—

Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,

I sighed for thee;

When light rode high, and the dew was gone,

And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,

And the weary Day turned to his rest,

Lingering like an unloved guest,

I sighed for thee.

10

20

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
 Wouldst thou me?
 Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
 Murmured like a noontide bee,
 Shall I nestle near thy side?
 Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
 No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
 Soon, too soon—

30

Sleep will come when thou art fled;
 Of neither would I ask the boon
 I ask of thee, belovèd Night—
 Swift be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon!

(1821).

TO —

One word is too often profaned
 For me to profane it,
 One feeling too falsely disdained
 For thee to disdain it.
 One hope is too like despair
 For prudence to smother,
 And pity from thee more dear
 Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,
 But wilt thou accept not
 The worship the heart lifts above
 And the Heavens reject not;
 The desire of the moth for the star,
 Of the night for the morrow,
 The devotion to something afar
 From the sphere of our sorrow?

10

(1821).

TO —

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the belovèd's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

(1821).

LINES: WHEN THE LAMP IS SHATTERED

When the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead—

When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed.

When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;

When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendour
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute,—
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled
Love first leaves the well-built nest,
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possest. 20

O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high:
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home 30
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

(1822).

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

1809-1892

THE LOTOS-EATERS

anguish
business
'Courage!' he said, and pointed toward the land,

'This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.'

In the afternoon they came unto a land

In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;

And like a downward smoke, the slender stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

metaphor
A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke, ^{semi} 10

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;

And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.

They saw the gleaming river seaward flow

From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,

Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmèd sunset linger'd low adown

In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down

Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale;

A land where all things always seemed the same!

And round about the keel with faces pale,

Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,

The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

20

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them, 30
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores: and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave,
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but ever-more 40
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, 'We will return no more;'
And all at once they sang, 'Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.'

CHORIC SONG

I.

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies, 50
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone, 60
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm!'
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III.

Lo! in the middle of the wood, 70
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days, 80
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why

Should life all labour be?

Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.

Let us alone. What is it that will last?

90

All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.

Let us alone. What pleasure can we have

To war with evil? Is there any peace

In ever climbing up the climbing wave?

All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave

In silence; ripen, fall and cease:

Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

v.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,

With half-shut eyes ever to seem

100

Falling asleep in a half-dream!

To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,

Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;

To hear each other's whisper'd speech;

Eating the Lotos day by day,

(To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,

And tender curving lines of creamy spray;

To lend our hearts and spirits wholly

To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;

To muse and brood and live again in memory,

110

With those old faces of our infancy

Heap'd over with a mound of grass,

Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

vi.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,

And dear the last embraces of our wives

And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change:

For surely now our household hearths are cold:

Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold 120
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto agèd breath, 130
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twinèd vine— 140
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone

Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust
is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we, 150
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was
seething free,

Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains
in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly
curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming
World:

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps
and fiery sands, 160

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,
and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the
soil,

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer, some—'tis whisper'd—
down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel. 170
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore

Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.
(1833).

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an agèd wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades 10
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades 20
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were

Memory
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30
 To follow knowledge, like a sinking star, *simile*
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees *slow gentle*
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail *calm* 40
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine. *in water*

There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail:
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with
 That ever with a frolic welcome took [me—
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil; 50
 Death closes all: but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
 The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60

Of all the western stars, until I die.
 — It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
 We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are:
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. 70

(1842).

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Break, break, break,
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
 And I would that my tongue could utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
 That he shouts with his sister at play!
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
 To their haven under the hill, 10
 But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
 And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
 But the tender grace of a day that is dead
 Will never come back to me.

(1842).

SONGS FROM "THE PRINCESS"

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
 Wind of the western sea,
 Low, low, breathe and blow,
 Wind of the western sea!
 Over the rolling waters go,
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,
 Blow him again to me;
 While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon; 10
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon;
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,
 Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon:
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

* * * * *

The splendour falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story:
 The long light shakes across the lakes
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory. 20
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
 They faint on hill or field or river; 30
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
 And grow forever and forever.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

* * * * *

3 Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
 In looking on the happy Autumn-fields, *sadness lovely*
 And thinking of the days that are no more. *summer days past*

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail, 40
 That brings our friends up from the underworld,
 Sad as the last which reddens over one
 That sinks with all we love below the verge;
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more. *friends gone*
away
unhappy

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
 The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds *dying*
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
 The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
 So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death, 50
 And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
 On lips that are for others; deep as love,
 Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
 O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

* * * * *

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
 The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me. 60

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

(1847).

IN MEMORIAM. A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

PRELUDE

*None for two
faith alone*

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

many

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

*faith me. what
prove is useless*

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why, 10
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they. 20

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear: 30
But help thy foolish ones to bear,—
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

✓Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
What seem'd my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved. 40

✓Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

* * * * *

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;

For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold:
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

* * * * *

One writes, that 'Other friends remain',
That 'Loss is common to the race'—
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought;

*sin because he
can't tell all his
feeling
poetry takes thoughts
of grief away*

50

misapprehension

60

*poetry to
comfort him*

70

Expecting still his advent home;
 And ever met him on his way
 With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day',
 Or 'here to-morrow will he come'. 80

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,
 That sittest ranging golden hair;
 And glad to find thyself so fair,
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
 In expectation of a guest;
 And thinking 'this will please him best',
 She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
 And with the thought her colour burns; 90
 And, having left the glass, she turns
 Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
 Had fallen, and her future Lord
 Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
 Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
 And what to me remains of good?
 To her, perpetual maidenhood,
 And unto me no second friend. 100

* * * * *

'More than my brothers are to me,'—
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
 I know thee of what force thou art
 To hold the costliest love in fee. *great love*
 But thou and I are one in kind
 As moulded like in Nature's mint;

And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves; the same 110
All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
One lesson from one book we learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine. 120

* * * * *

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare
The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the hornéd flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath 130
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odour streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace'.

(1850).

TITHONUS

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn. 10

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd 20
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance 30
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born;
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise, 40
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.'

Climax

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart 50
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opened buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd, 60
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East;
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die, 70
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

(1860).

TIRESIAS

I wish I were as in the years of old,
While yet the blessed daylight made itself
Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight, and woke
These eyes, now dull, but then so keen to seek
The meanings ambush'd under all they saw,
The flight of birds, the flame of sacrifice,
What omens may foreshadow fate to man
And woman, and the secret of the Gods.
My son, the Gods, despite of human prayer,
Are slower to forgive than human kings. 10
The great God, Ares, burns in anger still
Against the guiltless heirs of him from Tyre,
Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art, who found
Beside the springs of Dirce, smote, and still'd
Thro' all its folds the multitudinous beast,

The dragon, which our trembling fathers call'd
The God's own son.

A tale, that told to me,
When but thine age, by age as winter-white
As mine is now, amazed, but made me yearn 20
For larger glimpses of that more than man
Which rolls the heavens, and lifts, and lays the deep,
Yet loves and hates with mortal hates and loves,
And moves unseen among the ways of men.

Then, in my wanderings all the lands that lie
Subjected to the Heliconian ridge
Have heard this footstep fall, altho' my wont
Was more to scale the highest of the heights
With some strange hope to see the nearer God.

One naked peak—the sister of the sun 30
Would climb from out the dark, and linger there
To silver all the valleys with her shafts—
There once, but long ago, five-fold thy term
Of years, I lay; the winds were dead for heat;
The noonday crag made the hand burn; and sick
For shadow—not one bush was near—I rose
Following a torrent till its myriad falls
Found silence in the hollows underneath.

There in a secret olive-glade I saw
Pallas Athene climbing from the bath 40
In anger; yet one glittering foot disturb'd
The lucid well; one snowy knee was prest
Against the margin flowers; a dreadful light
Came from her golden hair, her golden helm
And all her golden armour on the grass,
And from her virgin breast, and virgin eyes
Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew dark
For ever, and I heard a voice that said

"Henceforth be blind, for thou has seen too much,
And speak the truth that no man may believe." 50

Son, in the hidden world of sight, that lives
Behind this darkness, I behold her still,
Beyond all work of those who carve the stone,
Beyond all dreams of Godlike womanhood,
Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a glance,
And as it were, perforce, upon me flash'd
The power of prophesying—but to me
No power—so chain'd and coupled with the curse
Of blindness and their unbelief, who heard
And heard not, when I spake of famine, plague, 60
Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire, flood, thunderbolt,
And angers of the Gods for evil done
And expiation lack'd—no power on Fate,
Theirs, or mine own! for when the crowd would roar
For blood, for war, whose issue was their doom,
To cast wise words among the multitude
Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in hours
Of civil outbreak, when I knew the twain
Would each waste each, and bring on both the yoke
Of stronger states, was mine the voice to curb 70
The madness of our cities and their kings.
Who ever turn'd upon his heel to hear
My warning that the tyranny of one
Was prelude to the tyranny of all?
My counsel that the tyranny of all
Led backward to the tyranny of one?

This power hath work'd no good to aught that lives,
And these blind hands were useless in their wars.
O therefore that the unfulfill'd desire,
The grief for ever born from griefs to be, 80
The boundless yearning of the Prophet's heart—

Could *that* stand forth, and like a statue, rear'd
 To some great citizen, win all praise from all
 Who past it, saying, 'That was he!' In vain!
 Virtue must shape itself in deed, and those
 Whom weakness or necessity have cramp'd
 Within themselves, immersing, each, his urn
 In his own well, draw solace as he may.

*nothing of
 remembrance
 after death*

Mencœceus, thou hast eyes, and I can hear
 Too plainly what full tides of onset sap 90
 Our seven high gates, and what a weight of war
 Rides on those ringing axles! jingle of bits,
 Shouts, arrows, tramp of the hornfooted horse
 That grind the glebe to powder! Stony showers
 Of that ear-stunning hail of Ares crash
 Along the sounding walls. Above, below,
 Shock after shock, the song-built towers and gates
 Reel, bruised and butted with the shuddering
 War-thunder of iron rams; and from within
 The city comes a murmur void of joy, 100
 Lest she be taken captive—maidens, wives,
 And mothers with their babblers of the dawn,
 And oldest age in shadow from the night,
 Falling about their shrines before their Gods,
 And wailing 'Save us.'

And they wail to thee!
 These eyeless eyes, that cannot see thine own,
 See this, that only in thy virtue lies
 The saving of our Thebes; for, yesternight,
 To me, the great God Ares, whose one bliss 110
 Is war, and human sacrifice—himself
 Blood-red from battle, spear and helmet tipt
 With stormy light as on a mast at sea,
 Stood out before a darkness, crying 'Thebes,

Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for I loathe
The seed of Cadmus—yet if one of these
By his own hand—if one of these—'

My son,

No sound is breathed so potent to coerce,
And to conciliate, as their names who dare 120
For that sweet mother land which gave them birth
Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their names,
Graven on memorial columns, are a song
Heard in the future; few, but more than wall
And rampart, their examples reach a hand
Far thro' all years, and everywhere they meet
And kindle generous purpose, and the strength
To mould it into action pure as theirs.

Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's best end
Be to end well! and thou refusing this, 130
Unvenerable will thy memory be
While men shall move the lips: but if thou dare—
Thou, one of these, the race of Cadmus—then
No stone is fitted in yon marble girth
Whose echo shall not tongue thy glorious doom,
Nor in this pavement but shall ring thy name
To every hoof that clangs it, and the springs
Of Dirce laving yonder battle-plain,
Heard from the roofs by night, will murmur thee
To thine own Thebes, while Thebes thro' thee shall
stand 140

Firm-based with all her Gods.

The Dragon's cave
Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing vines—
Where once he dwelt and whence he roll'd himself
At dead of night—thou knowest, and that smooth rock
Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of late

The woman-breasted Sphinx, with wings drawn back,
 Folded her lion paws, and look'd to Thebes.
 There blanch the bones of whom she slew, and these
 Mixt with her own, because the fierce beast found 150
 A wiser than herself, and dash'd herself
 Dead in her rage: but thou art wise enough,
 Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt the curse
 Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the truth
 Believe I speak it, let thine own hand strike
 Thy youthful pulses into rest and quench
 The red God's anger, fearing not to plunge
 Thy torch of life in darkness, rather—thou
 Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the stars
 Send no such light upon the ways of men 160
 As one great deed.

Thither, my son, and there
 Thou, that hast never known the embrace of love,
 Offer thy maiden life.

This useless hand!
 I felt one warm tear fall upon it. Gone! *Clinax*
 He will achieve his greatness.

But for me,
 I would that I were gather'd to my rest,
 And mingled with the famous kings of old, 170
 On whom about their ocean-islets flash
 The faces of the Gods—the wise man's word,
 Here trampled by the populace underfoot,
 There crown'd with worship—and these eyes will find
 The men I knew, and watch the chariot whirl
 About the goal again, and hunters race
 The shadowy lion, and the warrior-kings,
 In height and prowess more than human, strive
 Again for glory, while the golden lyre

Is ever sounding in heroic ears 180
Heroic hymns, and every way the vales
Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-fume
Of those who mix all odour to the Gods
On one far height in one far-shining fire.

(1885).

Emotions play on

ROBERT BROWNING

1812-1889

SONGS FROM "PIPPA PASSES"

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled:
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

* * * *

Give her but a least excuse to love me!

When—where—

How—can this arm establish her above me,

If fortune fixed her as my lady there,

There already, to eternally reprove me?

("Hist"—said Kate the queen;

But "Oh—" cried the maiden, binding her tresses,

"'Tis only a page that carols unseen,

"Crumbling your hounds their messes!")

Is she wronged?—To the rescue of her honour,

My heart!

Is she poor?—What costs it to be styled a donor? 20

Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.

But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her!

("Nay, list,"—bade Kate the queen;

And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,

"'Tis only a page that carols unseen

"Fitting your hawks their jesses!")

(1841).

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
 Looking as if she were alive. I call
 That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
 Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
 "Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
 Stranger like you that pictured countenance,
 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
 But to myself they turned (since none puts by
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
 And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
 How such a glance came there; so, not the first
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
 Her husband's presence only, called that spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
 Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
 Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint
 Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had
 A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
 Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
 Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
 The dropping of the daylight in the West,
 The bough of cherries some officious fool
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
 She rode with round the terrace—all and each
 Would draw from her alike the approving speech,

10

20

30

Paragraph

*Renaissance Duke
 arrogance
 pride of name
 love of art
 self-centred*

jealousy

jealousy

shy

Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked
 Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
 This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
 In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
 Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
 —E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
 Never to stoop. O sir, she smiled, no doubt,
 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
 Much the same smile! This grew; I gave commands;
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
 As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
 The company below, then. I repeat,
 The Count your master's known munificence
 Is ample warrant that no just pretence
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

40

50

(1843).

MEMORABILIA

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
 And did he stop and speak to you,
 And did you speak to him again?
 How strange it seems and new!

But you were living before that,
And also you were living after;
And the memory I started at—
My starting moves your laughter!

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
And a certain use in the world no doubt, 10
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
'Mid the blank miles round about:

For there I picked up on the heather
And there I put inside my breast
A molted feather, an eagle-feather!
Well, I forget the rest.

(1843).

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows! 10
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture

The first fine careless rapture!
 And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
 The buttercups, the little children's dower
 —Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower! 20
 (1845).

“DE GUSTIBUS—”

Concerning Taste

Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees,
 (If our loves remain)
 In an English lane,
 By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.
 Hark, those two in the hazel coppice—
 A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,
 Making love, say,—
 The happier they!
 Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,
 And let them pass, as they will too soon, 10
 With the beanflowers' boon,
 And the blackbird's tune,
 And May, and June!

What I love best in all the world
 Is a castle, precipice-encurled,
 In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine.
 Or look for me, old fellow of mine,
 (If I get my head from out the mouth
 O' the grave, and loose my spirit's bands,
 And come again to the land of lands)— 20
 In a sea-side house to the farther South,
 Where the baked cicala dies of drouth,
 And one sharp tree—'tis a cypress—stands,
 By the many hundred years red-rusted,

Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'ercrusted,
 My sentinel to guard the sands
 To the water's edge. For, what expands
 Before the house, but the great opaque
 Blue breadth of sea without a break?
 While, in the house, forever crumbles 30
 Some fragment of the frescoed walls,
 From blisters where a scorpion sprawls.
 A girl bare-footed brings, and tumbles
 Down on the pavement, green-flesh melons,
 And says there's news to-day—the king
 Was shot at, touched in the liver-wing,
 Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling:
 —She hopes they have not caught the felons.
 Italy, my Italy!
 Queen Mary's saying serves for me— 40
 (When fortune's malice
 Lost her Calais)—
 Open my heart and you will see
 Graved inside of it, "Italy."
 Such lovers old are I and she:
 So it always was, so shall ever be!

(1855).

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

I.

Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles,
 Miles and miles
 On the solitary pastures where our sheep,
 Half-asleep,
 Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop
 As they crop—

Was the site once of a city great and gay,
 (So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince
 Ages since 10
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
 Peace or war.

II.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
 As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
 From the hills
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
 Into one,)
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
 Up like fires 20
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
 Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
 Twelve abreast.

III.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
 Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
 And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
 Stock or stone— 30
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
 Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
 Struck them tame:
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
 Bought and sold.

IV.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored, 40
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

V.

And I know, while thus the quiet colored eve
Smiles to leave 50
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
Melt away—
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless,
dumb
Till I come. 60

VI.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,

All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then,
 All the men!

When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
 Either hand

On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
 Of my face,

70

Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
 Each on each.

VII.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
 South and North,

And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
 As the sky,

Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
 Gold, of course!

Oh heart! oh blood that freezes. blood that burns!
 Earth's returns

80

For whole centuries of folly, noise, and sin!
 Shut them in,

With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
 Love is best.

(1855).

ANDREA DEL SARTO

CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

But do not let us quarrel any more,

No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:

Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.

You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?

I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,

Treat his own subject after his own way,

Fix his own time, accept too, his own price,

And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love! 10
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this! 20
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside,
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require:
It saves a model. So! keep looking so—
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his, 30
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
There's what we painters call our harmony!
ant A common grayness silvers everything,— *true of his painting*
All in a twilight, you and I alike
—You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone you know)—but I, at every point:
My youth, my hope, my heart, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole. 40

There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
 That length of convent-wall across the way
 Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
 The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
 And autumn grows, autumn in everything.

Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape

As if I saw alike my work and self

And all that I was born to be and do,

a. A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.

How strange now looks the life he makes us lead; 50

b. So free we seem; so fettered fast we are!

I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!

This chamber for example—turn your head—

All that's behind us! You don't understand

Nor care to understand about my art,

But you can hear at least when people speak:

And that cartoon, the second from the door

—It is the thing, Love! so such thing should be—

Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.

I can do with my pencil what I know, 60

What I see, what at bottom of my heart

I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—

Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,

a. I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,

Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,

And just as much they used to say in France.

At any rate, 'tis easy, all of it!

No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:

I do what many dream of all their lives

—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do, 70

And fail in doing. I could count twenty such

On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,

Who strive—you don't know how the others strive

To paint a little thing like that you smeared
 Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—
 Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
 (I know his name, no matter)—so much less!
 Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
 There burns a truer light of God in them,
 In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain, 80
 Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
 This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
 Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
 Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
 Enter and take their place there sure enough,
 Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.

The sudden blood of these men! at a word
 Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.

I, painting from myself, and to myself, 90

Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
 Or their praise either. Somebody remarks

Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
 His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
 Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?

Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,

Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray

Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!

I know both what I want and what might gain, 100

And yet how profitless to know, to sigh

"Had I been two, another and myself,
 Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.

Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth

The Urbinate who died five years ago.

('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)

Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
 Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
 Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
 Above and through his art—for it gives way; 110
 That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
 A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
 Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
 He means right—that a child may understand.
 Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:

But all the play, the insight and the stretch—
 Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
 Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
 We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
 Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think— 120
 More than I merit, yes, by many times.

But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
 And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
 And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
 The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—
 Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
 Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
 "God and the glory! never care for gain.

The present by the future, what is that?
 Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!
 Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"

I might have done it for you. So it seems:
 Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.

Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
 The rest avail not. Why do I need you?

What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
 In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
 And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:

Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—

she gets
 rather

infatuated
 with her

she keeps him
 down

130
 was resigned
 to fate

8.

And thus we half-men struggle. At the end, 140

B. God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.

'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau! 150

I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look,—
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls 160
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!

A good time, was it not, my kingly days,
And had you not grown restless . . . but I know—
'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world. 170
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.

The triumph was—to reach and stay there: since
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
“Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife”—
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge 180
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)
“Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how, 190
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!”
To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?) 200
If really there was such a chance, so lost,—
Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night

I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by. 210
Come from the window, love,—come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin here again? he waits outside? 220
Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans?
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face. 230
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough

To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
What's better and what's all I care about, 240
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!

Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis!—it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want. 250

Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
And I have laboured somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!
No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—260
Four great walls in the new Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

(1855).

PROSPICE

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall, 10
Though a battle's to fight ere the ^{reward} guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold. 20
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

(1864).

THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC

PROLOGUE

Such a starved bank of moss
 Till, that May-morn,
 Blue ran the flash across:
 Violets were born!

Mary
 Sky—what a scowl of cloud
 Till, near and far,
 Ray on ray split the shroud:
 Splendid, a star!

World—how it walled about
 Life with disgrace
 Till God's own smile came out:
 That was thy face!

10

EPILOGUE

What a pretty tale you told me
 Once upon a time
 —Said you found it somewhere (scold me!)
 Was it prose or was it rhyme,
 Greek or Latin? Greek, you said,
 While your shoulder propped my head.

Anyhow there's no forgetting
 This much if no more,
 That a poet (pray, no petting!)
 Yes, a bard, sir, famed of yore,
 Went where suchlike used to go,
 Singing for a prize, you know.

20

Well, he had to sing, nor merely
 Sing but play the lyre;

Playing was important clearly
Quite as singing: I desire,
Sir, you keep the fact in mind
For a purpose that's behind.

30

There stood he, while deep attention
Held the judges round,
—Judges able, I should mention,
To detect the slightest sound
Sung or played amiss: such ears
Had old judges, it appears!

None the less he sang out boldly,
Played in time and tune,
Till the judges, weighing coldly
Each note's worth, seemed, late or soon, 40
Sure to smile "In vain one tries
Picking faults out: take the prize!"

When, a mischief! Were they seven
Strings the lyre possessed?
Oh, and afterwards eleven,
Thank you! Well, sir,—who had guessed
Such ill luck in store?—it happed
One of those same seven strings snapped.

All was lost then! No! a cricket
(What "cicada"? Pooh!)
—Some mad thing that left its thicket
For mere love of music—flew
With its little heart on fire,
Lighted on the crippled lyre.

50

So that when (Ah, joy!) our singer
For his truant string

*wants things correct
particular name*

Feels with disconcerted finger,
 What does cricket else but fling
 Fiery heart forth, sound the note
 Wanted by the throbbing throat?

60

Ay and, ever to the ending,
 Cricket chirps at need,
 Executes the hand's intending,
 Promptly, perfectly,—indeed
 Saves the singer from defeat
 With her chirrup low and sweet.

Till, at ending, all the judges
 Cry with one assent
 "Take the prize—a prize who grudges
 Such a voice and instrument?
 Why, we took your lyre for harp,
 So it shrilled us forth F sharp!"

70

Did the conqueror spurn the creature,
 Once its service done?
 That's no such uncommon feature
 In the case when Music's son
 Finds his Lotte's power too spent
 For aiding soul-development.

No! This other on returning
 Homeward, prize in hand,
 Satisfied his bosom's yearning:
 (Sir, I hope you understand!)
 —Said "Some record there must be
 Of this cricket's help to me!"

80

So, he made himself a statue:
 Marble stood, life-size;

On the lyre, he pointed at you,
Perched his partner in the prize;
Never more apart you found
Her, he throned, from him, she crowned. 90

That's the tale: its application?
Somebody I know
Hopes one day for reputation
Through his poetry that's—Oh,
All so learned and so wise
And deserving of a prize!

If he gains one, will some ticket,
When his statue's built,
Tell the gazer " 'Twas a cricket
Helped my crippled lyre, whose lilt 100
Sweet and low, when strength usurped
Softness' place i' the scale, she chirped?

"For as victory was nighest,
While I sang and played,—
With my lyre at lowest, highest,
Right alike,—one string that made
'Love' sound soft was snapt in twain,
Never to be heard again,—

"Had not a kind cricket fluttered,
Perched upon the place 110
Vacant left, and duly uttered
'Love, Love, Love,' whene'er the bass
Asked the treble to atone
For its somewhat sombre drone."

But you don't know music! Wherefore
Keep on casting pearls

To a—poet? All I care for
 Is—to tell him that a girl's
 "Love" comes aptly in when gruff
 Grows his singing. (There, enough!) 120
 (1878).

ASOLANDO.

EPILOGUE.

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
 When you set your fancies free,
 Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, im-
 prisoned—
 Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
 —Pity me?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!

What had I on earth to do
 With the slothful, with the *weak* mawkish, the unmanly?
 Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivell *useless—hopelessly*
 —Being—who? 10

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
 Never doubted clouds would break,
 Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would
 triumph,
 Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
 Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
 Greet the unseen with a cheer!
 Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
 "Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare ever
 There as here!" 20
 (1890).

MATTHEW ARNOLD

1822-1888

SHAKESPEARE

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask: thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill
That to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the Heaven of Heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foil'd searching of mortality:
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure, 10
Didst walk on Earth unguess'd at. Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness that impairs, all griefs that bow,
Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.

(1849).

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow,
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go— 10

Call once yet!

In a voice that she will know:

'Margaret! Margaret!'

Children's voices should be dear

(Call once more) to a mother's ear;

Children's voices, wild with pain—

Surely she will come again!

Call her once, and come away;

This way, this way!

'Mother dear, we cannot stay! 20

The wild white horses foam and fret.'

Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;

Call no more!

One last look at the white-wall'd town,

And the little grey church on the windy shore;

Then come down!

She will not come though you call all day;

Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday 30

We heard the sweet bells over the bay?

In the caverns where we lay,

Through the surf and through the swell,

The far-off sound of a silver bell?

Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,

Where the winds are all asleep;

Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,

Where the salt weed sways in the stream,

Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,

Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground; 40

Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,

Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me, 50
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea;
She said: 'I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with thee.'
I said: 'Go up, dear heart, through the waves; 60
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!'
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
'Long prayers,' I said, 'in the world they say;
Come!' I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still, 70
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.

Call her once before you go— 10
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know:
'Margaret! Margaret!'
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain—
Surely she will come again!
Call her once, and come away;
This way, this way!
'Mother dear, we cannot stay! 20
The wild white horses foam and fret.'
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore;
Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday 30
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground; 40
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,

Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
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On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
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In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with thee.'
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'Long prayers,' I said, 'in the world they say;
Come!' I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still, 70
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.

We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
'Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
Dear heart,' I said, 'we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.'
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book! 80
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: 'O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy! 90
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun!
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare; 100
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh,

For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children;
Come, children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows coldly;
Lights shine in the town.

110

She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.

We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.

Singing: 'Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she.
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea.'

120

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low,
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom,
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.

We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;

130

At the church on the hillside—
 And then come back down;
 Singing: 'There dwells a loved one,
 But cruel is she!
 She left lonely for ever
 The kings of the sea.'

140

(1849).

RUGBY CHAPEL

NOVEMBER, 1857

Coldly, sadly descends
 The autumn evening. The field
 Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
 Of wither'd leaves, and the elms,
 Fade into dimness apace,
 Silent;—hardly a shout
 From a few boys late at their play!
 The lights come out in the street,
 In the school-room windows; but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere,
 Through the gathering darkness, arise
 The chapel-walls, in whose bound
 Thou, my father! art laid.

10

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
 Of the autumn evening. But ah!
 That word, gloom, to my mind
 Brings thee back in the light
 Of thy radiant vigour again!
 In the gloom of November we pass'd
 Days not of gloom at thy side;

20

*the solemn, austere
 chapel walls
 father to his
 mind*

*Contrast of the gloomy evening with
Dr Arnold's cheerfulness.*

RUGBY CHAPEL

167

Seasons impair'd not the ray
Of thine even cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee.

25

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

Similar

*For fifteen years
I have been
in the same
place as you
were when you
died.*

30

36

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labour-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

40

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live—
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraiest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly represses the bad.

*For some
years I have
been in the
same place as
you were when
you died.*

50

Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
 Those who with half-open eyes
 Tread the border-land dim
 'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succourest;—this was thy work,
 This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
 Of mortal men on the earth?—
 Most men eddy about
 Here and there—eat and drink,
 Chatter and love and hate,
 Gather and squander, are raised
 Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,
 Striving blindly, achieving
 Nothing; and then they die—
 Perish; and no one asks
 Who or what they have been,
 More than he asks what waves,
 In the moonlit solitudes mild
 Of the midmost Ocean, have swell'd,
 Foam'd for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
 Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
 Not with the crowd to be spent—
 Not without aim to go round
 In an eddy of purposeless dust,
 Effort unmeaning and vain.

Ah yes, some of us strive
 Not without action to die
 Fruitless, but something to snatch
 From dull oblivion, nor all
 Glut the devouring grave!

*The course of
 the life of mortal
 men on
 earth*

67
 58

60

70

80

We, we have chosen our path—
 Path to a clear-purposed goal,
 Path of advance!—but it leads
 A long, steep journey, through sunk
 Gorges, o'er mountains in snow!
 Cheerful, with friends, we set forth—
 Then, on the height, comes the storm! 90
 Thunder crashes from rock
 To rock, the cataracts reply;
 Lightnings dazzle our eyes;
 Roaring torrents have breach'd
 The track—the stream-bed descends
 In the place where the wayfarer once
 Planted his footstep—the spray
 Boils o'er its borders! aloft,
 The unseen snow-beds dislodge
 Their hanging ruin;—alas, 100
 Havoc is made in our train!
 Friends who set forth at our side
 Falter, are lost in the storm!
 We, we only, are left!
 With frowning foreheads, with lips
 Sternly compress'd, we strain on,
 On—and at nightfall, at last,
 Come to the end of our way,
 To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
 Where the gaunt and taciturn host 110
 Stands on the threshold, the wind
 Shaking his thin white hairs—
 Holds his lantern to scan
 Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
 Whom in our party we bring?

Those who have chosen the
 path of advance seek their goal alone, their
 friends having been lost on the way.

Whom we have left in the snow?
 Sadly we answer: We bring
 Only ourselves; we lost
 Sight of the rest in the storm.
 Hardly ourselves we fought through, 120
 Stripp'd, without friends, as we are.
 Friends, companions, and train
 The avalanche swept from our side. 3

But thou would'st not *alone* 4
 Be saved, my father, *alone*
 Conquer and come to thy goal,
 Leaving the rest in the wild.
 We were weary, and we
 Fearful, and we, in our march,
 Fain to drop down and to die. 130
 Still thou turnedst, and still
 Beckonedst the trembler, and still
 Gavest the weary thy hand!
 If, in the paths of the world,
 Stones might have wounded thy feet,
 Toil or dejection have tried
 Thy spirit, of that we saw
 Nothing! to us thou wert still
 Cheerful, and helpful, and firm.
 Therefore to thee it was given 140
 Many to save with thyself;
 And, at the end of thy day,
 O faithful shepherd! to come,
 Bringing thy sheep in thy hand. 4

And through thee I believe
 In the noble and great who are gone;
 Pure souls honour'd and blest

Arnold
 like others did
 reach his
 alone, but
 tried to help

By former ages, who else—
 Such, so soulless, so poor,
 Is the race of men whom I see—
 Seem'd but a dream of the heart,
 Seem'd but a cry of desire.

150

Yes! I believe that there lived
 Others like thee in the past,
 Not like the men of the crowd
 Who all round me to-day
 Bluster or cringe, and make life
 Hideous, and arid, and vile;
 But souls temper'd with fire,
 Fervent, heroic, and good,
 Helpers and friends of mankind.

160

Servants of God!—or sons
 Shall I not call you? because
 Not as servants ye knew
 Your Father's innermost mind,
 His, who unwillingly sees
 One of his little ones lost—
 Yours is the praise, if mankind
 Hath not as yet in its march
 Fainted, and fallen, and died!

170

See! in the rocks of the world
 Marches the host of mankind,
 A feeble, wavering line!
 Where are they tending?—A God
 Marshall'd them, gave them their goal.—
 Ah, but the way is so long!
 Years they have been in the wild!
 Sore thirst plagues them; the rocks,
 Rising all round, overawe.

*He sincerely & honestly enables his
 son to believe in the great souls of history*

*There must have
 been others like thee
 or the sin would
 have been too great*

*progressive mankind
 advanced in civilization*

Strivings of the host
 of mankind.
 Factions divide them—their host
 Threatens to break, to dissolve.—
 Ah keep, keep them combined!
 Else, of the myriads who fill
 That army, not one shall arrive!
 Sole they shall stray; in the rocks
 Labour for ever in vain,
 Die one by one in the waste.

180

Characteristics
 the sound of
 and their effect
 on the dispirited
 race.
 Then, in such hour of need
 Of your fainting, dispirited race,
 Ye, like angels, appear,
 Radiant with ardour divine.
 Beacons of hope, ye appear!
 Languor is not in your heart,
 Weakness is not in your word,
 Weariness not on your brow.
 Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
 Panic, despair, flee away.
 Ye move through the ranks, recall
 The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
 Praise, re-inspire the brave!
 Order, courage, return.
 Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
 Follow your steps as ye go.
 Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
 Strengthen the wavering line,
 Stablish, continue our march,
 On, to the bound of the waste,
 On, to the City of God!

190

200

(1867).

DOVER BEACH

The sea is calm to-night,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the Straits;—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the ebb meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen; you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling, 10
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegæan, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea. 20

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
 To one another! for the world, which seems 30
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
 So various, so beautiful, so new,
 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
 And we are here as on a darkling plain
 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
 Where ignorant armies clash by night.

(1867).

THE FUTURE

A wanderer is man from his birth.
 He was born in a ship
 On the breast of the river of Time.
 Brimming with wonder and joy
 He spreads out his arms to the light,
 Rivets his gaze on the banks of the stream.
 As what he sees is, so have his thoughts been.
 Whether he wakes
 Where the snowy mountainous pass,
 Echoing the screams of the eagles, 10
 Hems in its gorges the bed
 Of the new-born clear-flowing stream:
 Whether he first sees light
 Where the river in gleaming rings
 Sluggishly winds through the plain:
 Whether in sound of the swallowing sea—
 As is the world on the banks,
 So is the mind of the man.

Vainly does each as he glides
Fable and dream 20
Of the lands which the river of Time
Had left ere he woke on its breast,
Or shall reach when his eyes have been clos'd.
Only the tract where he sails
He wots of; only the thoughts,
Raised by the objects he passes, are his.

Who can see the green earth any more
As she was by the sources of Time?
Who imagines her fields as they lay
In the sunshine, unworn by the plough? 30
Who thinks as they thought,
The tribes who then roam'd on her breast,
Her vigorous primitive sons?

What girl
Now reads in her bosom clear
As Rebekah read, when she sate
At eve by the palm-shaded well?
Who guards in her breast
As deep, as pellucid a spring
Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure? 40

What bard,
At the height of his vision, can deem
Of God, of the world, of the soul,
With a plainness as near,
As flashing as Moses felt,
When he lay in the night by his flock
On the starlit Arabian waste?
Can rise and obey
The beck of the Spirit like him?

This tract which the river of Time
Now flows through with us, is the plain.
Gone is the calm of its earlier shore.
Border'd by cities, and hoarse
With a thousand cries is its stream
And we on its breast, our minds
Are confused as the cries which we hear,
Changing and shot as the sights which we see.

And we say that repose has fled
For ever the course of the river of Time;
That cities will crowd to its edge
In a blacker incessanter line;
That the din will be more on its banks,
Denser the trade on its stream
Flatter the plain where it flows,
Fiercer the sun overhead;
That never will those on its breast
See an ennobling sight,
Drink of the feeling of quiet again.

But what was before us we know not,
And we know not what shall succeed. 70

Haply, the river of Time,
As it grows, as the towns on its marge
Fling their wavering lights
On a wider, statelier stream—
May acquire, if not the calm
Of its early mountainous shore,
Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And the width of the waters, the hush
Of the grey expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current and spotted with foam 80

As it draws to the Ocean, may strike
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast,
As the pale waste widens around him—
As the banks fade dimmer away—
As the stars come out, and the night-wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite Sea.

(1852).

*alliteration + varied
vowel harmony*

SWINBURNE

1837-1909

or 3 trisyllabic

THE FORSAKEN GARDEN

contrast
In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island, *similitude*
The ghost of a garden fronts the sea. *personification*
A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses
The steep, square slope of the blossomless bed
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its
Now lie dead. [roses]

metaphor
The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken
To the low last edge of the long lone land. *onomatopoeia* 10
If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?
So long have the gray, bare walks lain guestless,
Through branches and briars if a man make way,
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's, restless
Night and day.

metaphor
The dense, hard passage is blind and stifled
That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have rifled *plundered*
Of all but the thorns that are touched not of Time. 20
The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain.
The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,
These remain.

Not a flower to be pressed of the foot that falls not;
As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;

From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls
not,

Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.
Over the meadows that blossom and wither
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song;
Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long.

30

The sun burns sere and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.
Only the wind here hovers and revels
In a round where life seems barren as death.
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago.

40

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look thither,"
Did he whisper? "Look forth from the flowers to the
sea;
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms
wither,
And men that love lightly may die—but we?"
And the same wind sang and the same waves whitened,
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had
lightened,
Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end—but what end who knows? 50
Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?
What love was ever as deep as a grave?

They are loveless now as the grass above them
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be. 60
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When, as they that are free now of weeping and laughter,
We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again forever;
Here change may come not till all change end.
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never,
Who have left naught living to ravage and rend.
Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these shall be; 70
Till a last wind's breath, upon all these blowing,
will Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise and the sheer cliff crumble,
Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble
The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink;
Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead. 80

—A. C. Swinburne

*From "Poetical Works" by permission of the
Publishers, William Heinemann Ltd.,
London.*

*Description of desolate garden
that death even dies than*

pre-Baylyst brotherhood
single spiritual theme in material way
Age 19

ROSSETTI

1828-1882

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

magic #5

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

means wheel 10

to Her ^{*it*} seemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
However Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
Fell all about my face . . .
Nothing: the autumn fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace).

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;

20

By God built over the sheer depth
 The which is Space begun;
 So high, that looking downward thence
 She scarce could see the sun.

30

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
 Of ether, as a bridge.
 Beneath, the tides of day and night
 With flame and darkness ridge
 The void, as low as where this earth
 Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
 'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
 Spoke evermore among themselves
 Their heart-remembered names;
 And the souls mounting up to God
 Went by her like thin flames.

40

And still she bowed herself and stooped
 Out of the circling charm;
 Until her bosom must have made
 The bar she leaned on warm,
 And the lilies lay as if asleep
 Along her bended arm.

*definite
picture*

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
 Time like a pulse shake fierce
 Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
 Within the gulf to pierce
 Its path; and now she spoke as when
 The stars sang in their spheres.

50

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
 Was like a little feather

Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

60

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened? When those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come", she said.
"Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

70

"When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

80

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree

Within whose secret growth the Dove
 Is sometimes felt to be,
 While every leaf that His plumes touch
 Saith His Name audibly.

90

“And I myself will teach to him,
 I myself, lying so,
 The songs I sing here; which his voice
 Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
 And find some knowledge at each pause,
 Or some new thing to know”.

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!
 Yea, one wast thou with me
 That once of old. But shall God lift
 To endless unity
 The soul whose likeness with thy soul
 Was but its love for thee?)

100

“We two,” she said, “will seek the groves
 Where the lady Mary is,
 With her five handmaidens, whose names
 Are five sweet symphonies,
 Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
 Margaret and Rosalys.

“Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
 And foreheads garlanded;
 Into the fine cloth white like flame
 Weaving the golden thread
 To fashion the birth-robcs for them
 Who are just born, being dead.

110

“He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
 Then will I lay my cheek

To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak. 120

“Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles:
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

“There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love,—only to be, 130
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he.”

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild—
“All this is when he comes.” She ceased.
The light thrilled towards her, fill’d
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smil’d.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres: 140
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

—D. G. Rossetti

*From “Rossetti’s Complete Works” by permission
of Ellis Publishers, London.*

HENLEY

1849-1903

MARGARITAE SORORI

I. M.

from verse
A late lark twitters from the quiet skies,
And from the west,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, gray city
An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.

The smoke ascends
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires
Shine and are changed. In the valley 10
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night—
Night with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!
My task accomplish'd and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing, 20
Let me be gather'd to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.

—W. E. Henley

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and The Macmillan Company of Canada
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GEORGE MEREDITH

1828-1909

WOODLAND PEACE

Sweet as Eden is the air,
And Eden-sweet the ray.
No Paradise is lost for them
Who foot by branching root and stem,
And lightly with the woodland share
The change of night and day.

Here all say,
We serve her, even as I:
We brood, we strive to sky,
We gaze upon decay,
We wot of life through death,
How each feeds each we spy;
And is a tangle round,
Are patient; what is dumb
We question not, nor ask
The silent to give sound,
The hidden to unmask,
The distant to draw near.

And this the woodland saith:
I know not hope or fear;
I take whate'er may come;
I raise my head to aspects fair,
From foul I turn away.

Sweet as Eden is the air,
And Eden-sweet the ray. (1870).

—George Meredith

*From "Poetical Works", by permission of Messrs.
Constable & Co. Ltd., London, and Messrs.
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.*

DIRGE IN WOODS

Memory
figure of speech
rhythm
reflective lyric

A wind sways the pines,
 And below
 Not a breath of wild air;
simile
 Still as the mosses that glow
 On the flooring and over the lines
 Of the roots here and there.
 The pine-tree drops its dead;
 They are quiet, as under the sea.

Overhead, overhead
 Rushes life in a race, 10
 As the clouds the clouds chase;
 And we go,
 And we drop like the fruits of the tree,
 Even we,
 Even so.

(1870).

—George Meredith

*From "Poetical Works", by permission of Messrs.
 Constable & Co. Ltd., London and Messrs.
 Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.*

*lyric proper
lulling rhythm
appeal to imagination*

THOMAS HARDY

1840-1928

May 12

WHEN I SET OUT FOR LYONNESSE

setting out { When I set out for Lyonesse,
A hundred miles away,
The ^{hoar frost} rime was on the spray, *flowers*
And starlight lit my lonesomeness *repetition give
swiftly*
When I set out for Lyonesse
A hundred miles away. *alliteration, varied
vowel harmony*

*No person
could tell
what happened
there* { What would ^{happen} bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there
No prophet durst declare,
Nor did the wisest wizard guess
What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there. 10

*Joyful
return* { When I came back from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes,
All marked with mute surmise
My radiance rare and fathomless, *unlimited joy*
When I came back from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes!

(1870).

—Thomas Hardy

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*Narrative type
No definite tone - sober*

THE SOULS OF THE SLAIN

I. *Style - not as
simple as lyrics
Diction effective*

*personification
in the eye* { The thick lids of Night closed upon me
Alone at the Bill *judgy*
Of the Isle by the Race— *evening*

*the conversation between general & souls
of the slain on their return to England,
its effect on the men.*

2 sitting

Many-caverned, bald, wrinkled of face—
And with darkness and silence the spirit was on me
To brood and be still.

II.

*standing on
promontory jutting
out to sea & all
up the channel
criss-crossing tide*

No wind fanned the flats of the ocean
Or promontory sides,
Or the ooze by the strand,
Or the bent-bearded slope of the land, 10
Whose base took its rest amid everlong motion
Of criss-crossing tides.

fell of year

III.

anastrophe

Soon from out of the Southward seemed nearing
A whirr, as of wings
Waved by mighty-vanned flies,
Or by night-moths of measureless size,
And in softness and smoothness well-nigh beyond
hearing
Of ^{earthly} corporal things.

IV.

*no fixed
intense, yet
no resemblance
a man*

And they bore to the bluff, and alighted—
A dim-discerned train 20
Of sprites without mould,
Frameless souls none might touch or might hold—
On the ledge by the ^{tower} turreted lantern, far-sighted
By men of the main.

V.

*Arrival
of ghosts*

And I heard them say "Home!" and I knew them
For souls of the felled
On the earth's nether bord *southern hemisphere*
Under Capricorn, whither they'd warred,
And I neared in my awe, and gave heedfulness to
them
With breathings inheld. 30

Commonplace
Interpretation of human nature words of
Dead have human thoughts, emotions, actions, but not
human form.

THE SOULS OF THE SLAIN

191

VI - XI

VI.

Then, it seemed, there approached from the north-
ward

A senior soul-flame *General Wauchope*
Of the like filmy hue:

And he met them and spake: "Is it you,
O my men?" Said they, "Aye! We bear home-
ward and hearthward
To feast on our fame!"

VII.

"I've flown there before you," he said then:

"Your households are well:
But—your kin linger less

On your glory and war-mightiness 40
Than on dearer things."—"Dearer?" cried these
from the dead then,
"Of what do they tell?"

VIII.

"Some mothers muse sadly and murmur
Your doings as boys—
Recall the quaint ways
Of your babyhood's innocent days.

Some pray that, ere dying, your faith had grown
firmer,
And higher your joys.

IX.

"A father broods: 'Would I had set him
To some humble trade, 50
And so slacked his high fire,

And his passionate martial desire;
Had told him no stories to woo him and whet him
To this dire crusade!"

Verseification - somewhat irregular

Stanzas - 6 lines to each

1st + 4th line hexameter 2, 3 + last trimeter

5th line pentameter + varies

rhyme a, b, c, a, b

X.

“And, General, how hold out our sweethearts,
Sworn loyal as doves?”

—“Many mourn; many think
It is not unattractive to prink
Them in sables for heroes. Some fickle and fleet
Hearts
Have found them new loves.”

60

XI.

“And our wives?” quoth another resignedly,
“Dwell they on our deeds?”

—“Deeds of home; that live yet
Fresh as new—deeds of fondness or fret;
Ancient words that were kindly expressed or
unkindly,
These, these have their heeds.”

XII.

—“Alas! then it seems that our glory
Weighs less in their thought
Than our old homely acts,
And the long-ago commonplace facts
Of our lives—held by us as scarce part of our story,
And rated as nought!”

70

XIII.

Then bitterly some: “Was it wise now
To raise the tomb-door
For such knowledge? Away!”
But the rest: “Fame we prized till to-day;
Yet that hearts keep us green for old kindness we
prize now
A thousand times more!”

XIV.

Thus speaking, the trooped apparitions
 Began to disband 80
 And resolve them in two:
 Those whose record was lovely and true
 Bore to northward for home: those of bitter
 traditions
 Again left the land,

XV.

And, towering to seaward in legions,
 They paused at a spot
 Overbending the Race—
 That engulphing, ghastr, sinister place—
 Whither headlong they plunged, to the fathomless
 regions
 Of myriads forgot. 90

XVI.

And the spirits of those who were homing
 Passed on, rushingly,
 Like the Pentecost Wind;
 And the whirr of their wayfaring thinned
 And surceased on the sky, and but left in the
 gloaming
 Sea-mutterings and me.

December, 1899.

—Thomas Hardy

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LIFE LAUGHS ONWARD

Rambling I looked for an old abode
 Where, years back, one had lived I knew;
 Its site a dwelling duly showed,
 But it was new.

I went where, not so long ago,
The sod had riven two breasts asunder;
Daisies throve gaily there, as though
No grave were under.

I walked along a terrace where
Loud children gambolled in the sun; 10
The figure that had once sat there
Was missed by none.

Life laughed and moved on unsubdued;
I saw that Old succumbed to Young;
'Twas well. My too regretful mood
Died on my tongue.

—Thomas Hardy

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prompted by W. War.

IN TIME OF "THE BREAKING OF NATIONS"

Only a man harrowing clods (sods)
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass:
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by: 10
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

(1915).

—Thomas Hardy

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*resentment of calous attitude - tolerance
realizes life goes on - on.*

*May's Memory
inviction that
telling the
soil*

*earing lead
tending bounds of
civilization*

*one of man
for maid*

*will abide for aye outliving seemingly imp
but trivial events of history*

W. B. YEATS

1865-

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles
made;

Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes drop-
ping slow,

Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the
cricket sings;

There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always, night and day,
I hear lake-water lapping with low sounds by the
shore;

10

While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

—W. B. Yeats

*From "Poems", by permission of the Author and
Messrs. Ernest Benn (Messrs. T. Fisher
Unwin), Publishers.*

AEDH WISHES FOR THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet:
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

—W. B. Yeats

*From "Later Poems" by permission of the Author and
Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Publishers.*

beginning for a new, simple, and

PADRAIC COLUM

begins with gaiety and with touch of sadness 1881-

AN OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS

wants
O, to have a little house!

To own the hearth and stool and all!

The heaped up sods upon the fire,

The pile of turf against the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains

And pendulum swinging up and down!

A dresser filled with shining delph,

Speckled and white and blue and brown!

excitement
I could be busy all the day

Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,

10

And fixing on their shelf again

My white and blue and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night

Beside the fire and by myself,

Sure of a bed and loth to leave

The ticking clock and the shining delph!

Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,

And roads where there's never a house or bush,

monotony
And tired I am of bog and road,

And the crying wind and the lonesome hush! 20

And I am praying to God on high,

And I am praying Him night and day,

For a little house—a house of my own—

Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

—Padraic Colum

From "Wild Earth and other Poems", by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

Poets sincerity
Understanding of Nature - accurate descriptions
Reverence for lower forms of Nature
Subtle sensitiveness to mystical things
Unshaken faith in goodness of Creator
Excellent choice of words
Sustained loftiness of tone & exalted emotion

RALPH HODGSON

1871-

Setting
evening
natural surroundings
Author
accurate nature description
tone of rhythm given

THE SONG OF HONOUR

I climbed a hill as light fell short,
And rooks came home in scramble sort,
And filled the trees and flapped and fought
And sang themselves to sleep;
An owl from nowhere with no sound
Swung by and soon was nowhere found,
I heard him calling half-way round,
Holloing loud and deep;
A pair of stars, faint pins of light,
Then many a star, sailed into sight,
And all the stars, the flower of night,
Were round me at a leap;
To tell how still the valleys lay
I heard a watchdog miles away . . .
And bells of distant sheep.

climber flying
large

10

I heard no more of bird or bell,
The mastiff in a slumber fell,
I stared into the sky,
As wondering men have always done,
Since beauty and the stars were one,
Though none so hard as I.

20

It seemed, so still the valleys were,
As if the whole world knelt at prayer,
Save me and me alone;
So pure and wide that silence was
I feared to bend a blade of grass,
And there I stood like stone.

Reverence and awe

There, sharp and sudden, there I heard—
Ah! some wild lovesick singing bird
Woke singing in the trees?
The nightingale and babble-wren
Were in the English greenwood then,
And you heard one of these?

30

The babble-wren and nightingale
Sang in the Abyssinian vale
That season of the year!
Yet, true enough, I heard them plain,
I heard them both again, again,
As sharp and sweet and clear
As if the Abyssinian tree
Had thrust a bough across the sea,
Had thrust a bough across to me
With music for my ear!
I heard them both, and oh! I heard
The song of every singing bird
That sings beneath the sky,
And with the song of lark and wren
The song of mountains, moths and men
And seas and rainbows vie!

40

I heard the universal choir,
The Sons of Light exalt their Sire
With universal song,
Earth's lowliest and loudest notes,
Her million times ten million throats
Exalt Him loud and long,
And lips and lungs and tongues of Grace
From every part and every place
Within the shining of His face
The universal throng.

50

Man
I heard the hymn of being sound 60

From every well of honour found
In human sense and soul:

The song of poets when they write

The testament of Beautysprite

Upon a flying scroll,

The song of painters when they take

A burning brush for Beauty's sake

And limn her features whole—

The song of men divinely wise

Who look and see in starry skies 70

Not stars so much as robins' eyes,

And when these pale away

Hear flocks of shiny pleiades

Among the plums and apple trees

Sing in the summer day—

The song of all both high and low

To some blest vision true,

The song of beggars when they throw

The crust of pity all men owe

To hungry sparrows in the snow, 80

Old beggars hungry too—

The song of kings of kingdoms when

They rise above their fortune men,

And crown themselves anew,—

soldiers
The song of courage, heart and will

And gladness in a fight,

Of men who face a hopeless hill

With sparking and delight,

The bells and bells of song that ring

Round banners of a cause or king 90

From armies bleeding white—

The songs of sailors every one
 When monstrous tide and tempest run
 At ships like bulls at red,
 When stately ships are twirled and spun
 Like whipping-tops and help there's none
 And mighty ships ten thousand ton
 Go down like lumps of lead—

And songs of fighters stern as they
 At odds with fortune night and day,
 Crammed up in cities grim and grey
 As thick as bees in hives,
 Hosannas of a lowly throng
 Who sing unconscious of their song,
 Whose lips are in their lives—

100

And song of some at holy war
 With spells and ghouls more dread by far
 Than deadly seas and cities are,
 Or hordes of quarrelling kings—

The song of fighters great and small,
 The song of pretty fighters all,
 And high heroic things—

110

The song of lovers—who knows how
 Twitched up from place and time
 Upon a sigh, a blush, a vow,
 A curve or hue of cheek or brow,
 Borne up and off from here and now
 Into the void sublime!

And crying loves and passions still
 In every key from soft to shrill
 And numbers never done,
 Dog-loyalties to faith and friend,

120

Penury

*All people who
 fight against
 superstition
 scientists*

And loves like Ruth's of old no end,
And intermission none—

And burst on burst for beauty and
For numbers not behind,
From men whose love of motherland
Is like a dog's for one dear hand,
Sole, selfless, boundless, blind—

And song of some with hearts beside 130
For men and sorrows far and wide,
Who watch the world with pity and pride
And warm to all mankind—

Children & Mother
And endless joyous music rise
From children at their play,
And endless soaring lullabies
From happy, happy mother's eyes,
And answering crows and baby cries,
How many who shall say!

Old people
And many a song as wondrous well 140
With pangs and sweets intolerable
From lonely hearths too grey to tell,
God knows how utter grey!

And song from many a house of care
When pain has forced a footing there
And there's a Darkness on the stair
Will not be turned away—

And song—that song whose singers come
With old kind tales of pity from
The Great Compassion's lips, 150
That makes the bells of Heaven to peal
Round pillows frosty with the feel
Of Death's cold finger-tips—

The song of men all sorts and kinds,
 As many tempers, moods and minds
 As leaves are on a tree,
 As many faiths and castes and creeds,
 As many human bloods and breeds
 As in the world may be;

The song of each and all who gaze 160
 On Beauty in her naked blaze,
 Or see her dimly in a haze,
 Or get her light in fitful rays
 And tiniest needles even,

The song of all not wholly dark,
 Not wholly sunk in stupor stark
 Too deep for groping Heaven—
 And alleluias sweet and clear
 And wild with beauty men mishear,
 From choirs of song as near and dear 170
 To Paradise as they,

The everlasting pipe and flute
 Of wind and sea and bird and brute,
 And lips deaf men imagine mute
 In wood and stone and clay;

The music of a lion strong
 That shakes a hill a whole night long,
 A hill as loud as he,
 The twitter of a mouse among
 Melodious greenery, 180

The ruby's and the rainbow's song,
 The nightingale's—all three,
 The song of life that wells and flows
 From every leopard, lark and rose
 And everything that gleams or goes
 Lack-lustre in the sea.

I heard it all, each, every note
Of every lung and tongue and throat,
Ay, every rhythm and rhyme
Of everything that lives and loves 190
And upward, ever upward moves
From lowly to sublime!

Earth's multitudinous Sons of Light,
I heard them lift their lyric might
With each and every chanting sprite
That lit the sky that wondrous night
As far as eye could climb!

I heard it all, I heard the whole
Harmonious hymn of being roll
Up through the chapel of my soul 200
And at the altar die,
And in the awful quiet then
Myself I heard Amen, Amen,
Amen I heard me cry!

I heard it all, and then although
I caught my flying senses, oh,
A dizzy man was I!
I stood and stared; the sky was lit,
The sky was stars all over it,
I stood, I knew not why, 210
Without a wish, without a will,
I stood upon that silent hill
And stared into the sky until
My eyes were blind with stars and still
I stared into the sky.

—Ralph Hodgson

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Company, publishers.*

*Not of the princes and prelates with periwigged
Masefield pledges his poetry to
ignored, ignoble, ill-treated, individual
Written in Triplets (rhyming)*

JOHN MASEFIELD

1875-

A CONSECRATION

Not of the princes and prelates with periwigged
charioteers

Riding triumphantly laurelled to lap the fat of
the years,

Rather the scorned—the rejected—the men hem-
med in with the spears;

The men of the tattered battalion which fights
till it dies,

Dazed with the dust of the battle, the din and
the cries,

The men with the broken heads and the blood
running into their eyes.

Not the be-medalled Commander, beloved of
the throne,

Riding cock-horse to parade when the bugles are
blown,

But the lads who carried the koppie and cannot
be known.

Not the ruler for me, but the ranker, the tramp
of the road,

The slave with the sack on his shoulders pricked
on with the goad,

The man with too weighty a burden, too weary
a load.

The sailor, the stoker of steamers, the man with
the clout,

10

The chantyman bent at the halliards putting a
tune to the shout,
The drowsy man at the wheel and the tired look-
out.

Others may sing of the wine and the wealth and
the mirth,

The portly presence of potentates goodly in
girth;—

Mine be the dirt and the dross, the dust and scum
of the earth!

Theirs be the music, the colour, the glory, the
gold;

Mine be a handful of ashes, a mouthful of
mould.

Of the maimed, of the halt and the blind in the
rain and the cold—

Of these shall my songs be fashioned, my tale be
told. Amen.

—John Masefield

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Author and of the Publishers—William
Heinemann Ltd., London.*

THE SEEKERS

Friends and loves we have none, nor wealth, nor blessed
abode,

But the hope of the City of God at the other end of the
road.

Not for us are content, and quiet, and peace of mind,
For we go seeking a city that we shall never find.

There is no solace on earth for us—for such as we—
Who search for a hidden city that we shall never see.

Only the road and the dawn, the sun, the wind, and
 the rain,
 And the watch-fire under stars, and sleep, and the
 road again

We seek the City of God, and the haunt where beauty
 dwells,
 And we find the noisy mart and the sound of burial
 bells.

10

Never the golden city, where radiant people meet,
 But the dolorous town where mourners are going
 about the street.

We travel the dusty road till the light of the day is
 dim
 And sunset shows us spires away on the world's rim.

We travel from dawn to dusk, till the day is past
 and by,
 Seeking the Holy City beyond the rim of the sky.

Friends and loves we have none, nor wealth, nor blest
 abode,
 But the hope of the City of God at the other end of the
 road.

—John Masefield

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 Author and of the Publishers—William
 Heinemann Ltd., London.*

CARGOES

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir,
 Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
 With a cargo of ivory,
 And apes and peacocks,
 Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the
Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green
shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores. 10

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke
stack,
Butting through the Channel in the mad March
days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

—John Masefield

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Author and of the Publishers—William
Heinemann Ltd., London.*

*appeals to sense
beauty of autumn*

W. H. DAVIES

1870-

RICH DAYS

Welcome to you, rich Autumn days,
Ere comes the cold, leaf-picking wind;
When golden stooks are seen in fields,
All standing arm-in-arm entwined;
And gallons of sweet cider seen
On trees in apples red and green.

personification

With mellow pears that cheat our teeth,
Which melt that tongues may suck them in;
With cherries red, and blue-black plums,
Now sweet and soft from stone to skin; 10
And wood nuts rich, to make us go
Into the loveliest lanes we know.

—W. H. Davies

*From "The Bird of Paradise", by permission of
the Publishers, Jonathan Cape Limited,
London.*

*Poets fondness for
beautiful King.
loves its lonely places too*

THE KINGFISHER

It was the Rainbow gave thee birth,
And left thee all her lovely hues;
And, as her mother's name was Tears,
So runs it in thy blood to choose
For haunts the lonely pools, and keep
In company with trees that weep.

rhyme

Go you and, with such glorious hues,
Live with proud Peacocks in green parks;
On lawns as smooth as shining glass,
Let every feather show its mark; 10

Get thee on boughs and clap thy wings
Before the windows of proud kings.

Nay, lovely Bird, thou art not vain;
Thou hast no proud ambitious mind;
I also love a quiet place
That's green, away from all mankind;
A lonely pool, and let a tree
Sigh with her bosom over me.

—*W. H. Davies*

*From "The Bird of Paradise", by permission of
the Publishers, Jonathan Cape Limited,
London.*

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

1892-

FULL MOON

She was wearing the coral taffeta trousers
Someone had brought her from Ispahan,
And the little gold coat with pomegranate blossoms,
And the coral-hafted feather-fan;
But she ran down a Kentish lane in the moonlight,
And skipped in the pool of the moon as she ran.

She cared not a rap for all the big planets,
For Betelgeuse or Aldebaran,
And all the big planets cared nothing for her,
That small impertinent charlatan; 10
But she climbed on a Kentish stile in the moonlight
And laughed at the sky through the sticks of her fan.

—Vita Sackville-West

*From "Orchards and Vineyards", by permission
of John Lane The Bodley Head Limited,
Publishers, London.*

WALTER DE LA MARE

1873-

simplicity

ALL THAT'S PAST

Very old are the woods;
And the buds that break
Out of the briar's boughs,
When March winds wake,
So old with their beauty are—
Oh, no man knows
Through what wild centuries
Roves back the rose.

Very old are the brooks;
And the rills that rise
Where snow sleeps cold beneath
The azure skies
Sing such a history
Of come and gone,
Their every drop is as wise
As Solomon.

10

Very old are we men;
Our dreams are tales
Told in dim Eden
By Eve's nightingales;
We wake and whisper awhile,
But, the day gone by,
Silence and sleep like fields
Of amaranth lie.

20

—Walter de la Mare

From "Poems", by permission of the Author and
Constable & Co., Publishers, London.

NOD

Softly along the road of evening,
 In a twilight dim with rose,
 Wrinkled with age, and drenched with dew,
 Old Nod, the shepherd, goes.

His drowsy flock streams on before him,
 Their fleeces charged with gold,
 To where the sun's last beam leans low
 On Nod the shepherd's fold.

The hedge is quick and green with briar,
 From their sand the ^{rabbits} conies creep,
 And all the birds that fly in heaven
 Flock singing home to sleep.

10

His lambs outnumber a noon's roses,
 Yet, when night's shadows fall,
 His blind old sheep-dog, Slumber-soon,
 Misses not one of all.

His are the quiet ^{depth} steepes of dreamland,
 The waters of no-more-pain,
 His ram's bell rings 'neath an arch of stars,
 "Rest, rest, and rest again."

20

—Walter de la Mare

From "Poems", by permission of the Author and
 Constable & Co., Publishers, London.

FAREWELL

When I lie where shades of darkness
 Shall no more assail mine eyes,
 { Nor the rain make lamentation
 { When the wind sighs;

In bidding farewell to beauty, Walter de la Mare
wonders if those that follow will
appreciate the loveliness of the world.

THE LISTENERS

213

How will fare the world whose wonder
Was the very proof of me?
Memory fades, must the remembered
Perishing be?

Oh, when this my dust surrenders
Hand, foot, lip, to dust again,
May these loved and loving faces
Please other men!

{ May the rusting harvest hedgerow
Still the Traveller's Joy entwine,
And as happy children gather
Posies once mine.

{ Look thy last on all things lovely
Every hour. Let no night
Seal thy sense in deathly slumber
Till to delight

Thou have paid thy utmost blessing;
Since that all things thou wouldst praise
Beauty took from those who loved them
In other days.

—Walter de la Mare

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Constable & Co., Publishers, London.

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret, — lonely
Above the Traveller's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
"Is there anybody there?" he said.

What will become
of all the beauty
after he has finished
marvelling at it?
He hopes at his death
others may appreciate
beauty.

Lady of Lake

unseen mystère

But no one descended to the traveller;
 No head from the leaf-fringed sill 10
 Leaned over and looked into his gray eyes,
 Where he stood perplexed and still.
 But only a host of phantom listeners
 That dwelt in the lone house then
 Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
 To that voice from the world of men:
 Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark
 That goes down to the empty hall, [stair,
 Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
 By the lonely Traveller's call. 20
 And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
 Their stillness answering his cry,
 While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
 'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
 For he suddenly smote on the door, even
 Louder, and lifted his head:—
 "Tell them I came, and no one answered,
 That I kept my word," he said.
 Never the least stir made the listeners,
 Though every word he spake 30
 Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still
 From the one man left awake: *alive* [house
 Aye, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
 And the sound of iron on stone,
 { And how the silence surged softly backward,
 { When the plunging hoofs were gone.

—Walter de la Mare

From "Poems", by permission of the Author and
 Constable & Co., Publishers, London.

Combination of real & unreal

NOTES

GRAY

THOMAS GRAY was born in Cornhill, London, on December 26, 1716, the only one of a family of twelve children to survive infancy. His father was a worthless profligate. His tyranny, combined with the lad's separation from his mother during the years he was at school, gave the future poet's mind an incurable tendency towards melancholy. Through the influence of one of his mother's brothers, an assistant-master at Eton, Gray was privileged to be educated at that famous school. Later he spent four studious years at Cambridge (1734-38). Leaving the University, he intended to study law, but eventually chose no definite career, a course which was made possible by the fact that at about this time his private income was sufficiently increased to allow him to live comfortably without pecuniary worry. He travelled extensively in the British Isles and on the Continent, studied a wide variety of subjects and became one of the best informed and most cultured men of his time. During most of his life he resided at Cambridge. He was appointed Professor of Modern History there, a position which did not entail the necessity of lecturing to students. He died in his rooms at Pembroke College in 1771. He was buried in Stoke Poges cemetery beside his mother whom, to quote the inscription written by the poet himself for his tombstone, he had had "the misfortune to survive" for 18 years.

Gray has left us a very small number of complete poems, but those which we have are characterized by true poetic feeling and fine, polished workmanship which reflect the poet's refinement of nature and studious habits. He was a great lover and keen observer of natural beauty. His work, both in style and subject matter, stands out as very important in the period of transition from the Classical School to the Romantic. This fact is perhaps even more clearly illustrated in his "Journal" and his "Letters" than in his poetry: the student of Literature will find himself well repaid for the reading of these.

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The *Elegy* was begun in the year 1742 and finished in 1749. It is generally conceded that the most likely spot for its inspiration is the churchyard at Stoke Poges near Slough. Gray's mother moved to Stoke on the death of his father in 1741. It was in this churchyard that she was buried, and here the poet found his own last resting place.

This composition is one of the most widely known and admired poems in our Literature. While it utters nothing strikingly new or original in thought, it attains a high perfection of style and makes a "universal appeal to the tenderest and noblest depths of human feeling". It gives expression to reflections which readily arise in the hearts and minds of men to whom death is common and inevitable, but none the less mysterious and fascinating.

The poet has employed the simplest language and style as befits his subject matter. He said himself that "the style he aimed at was extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous and musical." In the *Elegy*, he has turned from the rich and powerful to sing "the short and simple annals of the poor" who lie at rest beneath the sheltering yew, "each in his narrow cell forever laid". Because of this very fact the poem is interesting to the student of literary history, as being one of those compositions which mark the transition from the comparatively narrow outlook and conventional, often artificial, style of the "classical" school of poets to the greater freedom and broader sympathy of the "romantic" school.

Page 1. — 1. The curfew bell was originally rung at 8 o'clock in England as a signal for extinguishing fires. The custom fell into disuse, but the term continued and was employed to describe, as here, any evening bell..

parting. Departing.

12. reign. Realm or kingdom.

13. The yew is symbolic of death. It was frequently employed in the shrubbery of cemeteries.

16. rude. Rustic; simple.

Page 2. — 26. glebe. Turf, soil, land.

24-28. In these lines one does not feel the actual presence of the scenes and people described. The poet is aloof from the occupations referred to. It is interesting in this respect to compare Gray with Burns.

30. homely. Humble; plain.

destiny obscure. Humble fate.

32. annals. Life stories.

29-32. This stanza, with its plea that the life story of the humble poor be admitted into poetry, marks a new spirit in Literature, a breaking away from the poetry of the late 17th and early

18th century to a new type—a spirit which was to find its most triumphant utterance in the poetry of Burns and Wordsworth.

33-36. These are the immortal lines which General Wolfe is said to have quoted as he made his way up the River St. Lawrence on the eve of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham.

35. *th'inevitable hour of Death.*

39. *fretted.* This word properly describes a very special kind of architectural adornment, but here may be used simply to mean adorned. Compare *Hamlet's* description of the sky, "this majestic roof fretted with golden fires".

41. *storied urn.* A burial urn with ornamentations, sculptures and, possibly, inscriptions. Compare Milton: "with storied windows richly dight".

42. *mansion.* Dwelling place.

43. *provoke.* Arouse; stimulate or urge to action.

51. *rage.* Enthusiasm; ecstasy of the poet or high emotion of the patriot.

52. *genial.* This word seems here to be used in a sense which is now obsolete, — native, natural, inborn. Wordsworth uses the word frequently to indicate inborn natural sympathy or sensitiveness to stimuli. Compare *Tintern Abbey*, page 49, line 115: "Should I the less suffer my genial spirits to decay".

Page 3. — 60. *guiltless of his country's blood.* Throughout the 18th century there was a very strong feeling against Cromwell. The greatness and sincerity of the man as a leader were not appreciated.

61. Gray spoke from a knowledge of Parliamentary eloquence. The elder Pitt was already famous for his skill in oratory.

78. *Some frail memorial.* Such old cemeteries as that at Stoke Poges are famous for the crude, often amusing epitaphs which appear on the tombstones.

Page 4, — 81. *unletter'd.* Uneducated, illiterate.

86. *being.* Existence.

90. *pious.* Dutiful; characterized by the respect and affection due to parents and relations, etc. This is the true Latin sense of the word. It is derived from "pius".

92. *wonted.* Accustomed or customary.

95. **chance.** By chance.

97-106. Compare Thomas Hardy's beautiful poem, *Afterwards*.

100. **lawn.** Level field or meadow.

101. At this point, a stanza which occurred in early manuscript versions of the poem has been left out.

"Him have we seen the green-wood side along,
While o'er the Heath we hied, our labours done,
Oft as the woodlark piped her farewell song,
With wistful eyes pursue the setting Sun".

105. **Hard by.** Near.

Page 5. — 111. **Another came.** Another morning came.

115. Reading was not a very common accomplishment in Gray's day.

117. Gray's poem was for some time circulated in manuscript and became very popular. The early versions show many readings which have been altered in later editions. At this point in the original copy, a beautiful stanza occurred, showing Gray's love of simple nature. It is interesting to speculate on his reasons for omitting the stanza.

"There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen are show'rs of violets found;
The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

119. **Science.** Knowledge in its broadest, most comprehensive sense.

It is suggested that the poet was, perhaps, thinking of himself as he wrote the lines of the epitaph. It is true that during the greater part of his life Gray was harassed by low spirits and melancholy. It is true, also, as Matthew Arnold pointed out, that, while Gray had the endowment of a great poet, "*he never spoke out*".

COLLINS

WILLIAM COLLINS was born on Christmas Day, 1721, at Chichester. The details of his early life are not fully known, but it is certain that he entered Winchester College at the age of 12 and seven years later went up to Oxford. His first important work—"Persian Eclogues"—(later called "Oriental Eclogues")—was published in 1742. Leaving Oxford in 1744, he went to London, where he often suffered great want. His "Odes", upon which his later fame largely depends, were published in 1747. Collins numbered among his friends some of the greatest of his contemporaries, notably Dr. Johnson and the poet Thomson. During the last years of his life he suffered almost constantly from brain-disease. He died in 1759.

Collins' early work is written in the prevailing classical style, employing the classical couplet of which he was by no means as great a master as his contemporary, Gray. His later work is romantic, both in form and feeling. Swinburne has drawn attention to the true poetic gift which Collins possessed, in a rather extravagant but very interesting passage:

"There was but one man in the time of Collins who had in him a note of pure lyric song, a pulse of inborn music irresistible and indubitable; and that he was that man he could not open his lips without giving positive and instant proof. Poetry was his birth-right: to the very ablest of his compeers it was never more than a christening gift".

Later, in the same essay, Swinburne has instituted a most apt and illuminating comparison:

"Among all English poets he (Collins) has, it seems to me, the closest affinity to our great contemporary school of French landscape-painters. Corot on canvas might have signed his *Ode to Evening*; Millet might have given us some of his graver studies, and left them as he did, no whit the less sweet for their softly austere and simply tender gravity."

ODE TO EVENING

This poem is interesting because, while Collins preserves much of the method of the earlier classical poets, the feeling for Nature which breathes through the lines is quite new and different. There is a spirit here with which we are to become very familiar in the work of the romanticists. He employs the typical classical devices of personification and sustained apostrophe but beneath these there is ample evidence that Collins had a real love for and intimate knowledge of Nature. The pictures in the poem reveal a delicate and refined beauty which reminds one of a Corot landscape.

Page 6. — 1 ff. The poet hesitates to offer his simple tribute to Evening. He fears that his rude country song will do scant honour to her blessed presence.

1. oaten stop. According to classical poets, the flute used by shepherds.

5. ff. Notice the rather formal terms in which Collins describes the sunset. Such phrases as the **bright-hair'd sun** and such figures of speech as those contained in the last three lines of this second stanza, were the "stock in trade" of the poets of the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

7. brede. Embroidery or raised ornamentations of any kind. Compare the use of this word in Keats *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, the last stanza.

wove. Woven.

9. 10. In contrast with the formality above, these lines with their intimate glimpses of Nature seem fresh and simple.

15. maid composed. Evening.

17. numbers. Verses.

21. folding-star. The star whose rising indicates that it is time the flocks were put into the fold.

21. ff. There is a frail, delicate loveliness about the next two stanzas which is quite characteristic of Collins' best work.

41. wont. Is accustomed.

BURNS

"His greatness, not his littleness,
Concerns mankind."

WILLIAM WATSON.

ROBERT BURNS was born on January 25th, 1759, in a humble clay cottage at Alloway, two miles south of Ayr. His father was a God-fearing, honest, but extremely poor Scotch peasant, who sought to wrest a simple living from the inhospitable soil of his small farm. Despite his poverty, however, he was a well-read man and coveted educational advantages for his children. The sons worked on the farm from an early age—at thirteen the future poet was doing a full day's work on the land. As circumstances permitted they were given what would now pass as a fairly thorough classical education, including mathematics, thorough training in English Grammar, French and a little Latin. After the death of their father—a victim of slavish toil, financial worry and consumption—the sons moved to another farm, Mossgiel, near Mauchline, but were there as unsuccessful as they had formerly been. Robert now left the farm for a time and attempted to take up surveying, but the change was unfortunate for him; during this period many of the habits which were later to wreck his life gained a firm hold upon him. Discouraged by the entanglements into which his conduct had led him, and worried by his financial condition, he was on the point of quitting Scotland for Jamaica, when there was published in Kilmarnock (1786) the first edition of his poems. The result was amazing: the volume took all Scotland, from the poor plow-boy to the lord, by storm. The poet became suddenly famous. He abandoned the idea of emigrating and went up to Edinburgh to arrange for a second edition. This appeared in 1787 and brought him in between £500 and £600. He was received everywhere in Edinburgh society and was much fêted and entertained. Although Burns' head was a bit turned at first, he was not slow to discover how shallow much of this adulation was and, having learnt much from his experience and not a little disillusioned, he returned to the country and established himself on a farm at Ellisland, near Dumfries. Here he was again unsuccessful and was glad to accept the post of exciseman (collector of liquor revenue) at Dumfries. There, in 1796, he died in extreme poverty, but surrounded by the care of loving friends.

Such is a brief and wholly inadequate outline of what Carlyle has called "a life of fragments". So rich is the character of Burns in contrasts and apparent contradictions, so varied the experiences of his pathetic life, that no brief account can give a complete picture of the man. The student of literature must supplement such a meagre sketch with detailed study and careful judgment. He must

approach the task with tolerance, remembering that he is forming an estimate of the character of a most sensitive being, who was torn continually by conflicting passions. At heart, Burns was usually, if not always, right. If he was not always "on the side of the angels", he was at least always on the side of humanity and justice.

It has been said that in the work of Gray, Goldsmith and Collins, we see the dawn of the new day in poetry, the Romantic Revival—in the lyrics of Burns we have the full sunrise. We find there, embodied completely, the spirit of the Romantic School—romantic love with its joy and sorrow, sympathetic understanding of the character and the lot in life of the common man, keen sensitiveness to the beauty of nature and quick response to its appeal, constant tendency to introspection with the inevitable, rapid transition from gay to melancholy, from hearty laughter to tears.

It is the great achievement of Burns that his songs and poems are sung and read by a constantly increasing number of people. Their simplicity and directness, together with their clear utterance of deep, human emotions, have given them a place in the every day life of thousands of the poet's countrymen. Indeed so artless are some of them and so true to human experience, that they take their place beside the finest folk songs in the universality of their appeal. They are in the truest sense "heartfelt songs".

TO A MOUSE

All Burns' greatest lyrics are written in the dialect of the simple Ayrshire folk, among whom he lived, and whose joys and sorrows he knew by personal experience.

In this poem, the ploughman poet pauses for a moment to contemplate a simple object of nature, turning aside to share its sorrow, and finding in its misfortune a complete symbol of his own sad fate.

Page 8. — 1. sleekit. Sleek.

cow'rin'. Frightened; cowering.

4. bickering brattle. Hasty scampering.

5. laith. Loath.

6. pattle. Staff of the plough.

7. dominion. Lordship. Burns here refers to man's assumed superiority over the lower animals.

8. social union. The bond which unites, or should unite all created things. The recognition of such a bond was to become one of the very powerful tenets of the creed of poets and philosophers of the late 18th and 19th centuries. It lay at the base of Rousseau's conception of society. It found a complete utterance in Wordsworth's poetry of Nature.

- 13. whiles. At times.
- 14. maun. Must.
- 15. daimen-icker. An occasional ear (*icker*—ear).
thrave. Sheaf.
- 17. the lave. What is left.
- 20. silly. Weak, frail.
- 21. big. Build.
- 22. foggage. Aftergrass. Such grass may be found in stubble fields where it has grown up after the grain has been cut. The term is also applied to dead grass or moss which remains as a covering on the ground all winter.
- 24. snell. Biting.
- Page 9. — 31. stibble. Stubble.
- 34. But house or hald. Without house or holding.
- 35. thole. Suffer, bear.
- 36. cranreuch. Hoar-frost.
- 40. a-gley. Off the right course, awry.
- 43-48. Compare the thought of Shelley in *To A Skylark*, page 96, lines 86-90.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY

Page 9. — 3. stour. Dust; earth.

Page 10.— 7-12. Note how intimate Burns is with nature, observing every smallest detail.

- 21. random bield. Chance shelter.
- 23. histie stibble-field. Bare stubble field.
- 31. artless. Simple; inexperienced; unskilled to meet the world. The following stanzas are an excellent example of the breadth of Burns' understanding of life and human nature, and the sincerity of his sympathy.

Page 11. — 39. card. Perhaps used in the sense of compass, carrying out the figure begun in "life's rough ocean". Compare *Macbeth*—I, 3, 17—"the shipman's card".

- 40. lore. Learning.
- 49. Again the poet finds in nature a symbol of his own unto-ward fate.

“A MAN’S A MAN FOR A’ THAT”

In this poem, Burns voices his faith in the humble man, who, he says, is far above the possessor of wealth or rank, if he have honest worth. With this type of Scots countryman, the poet was very familiar. Such a man was his father, whose picture he has left us in *The Cotter’s Saturday Night*. Such men are the finest product of Scotland, the simple honour of their lives, the surest basis for their country’s greatness.

“From scenes like these, old Scotia’s grandeur springs,
 That makes her lov’d at home, rever’d abroad:
 Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
 “An honest man’s the noblest work of God;”
 And certes, in fair virtue’s heavenly road,
 The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
 What is a lordling’s pomp? a cumbrous load,
 Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
 Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin’d!
 O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
 For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,
 Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
 Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
 And O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
 From luxury’s contagion, weak and vile!
 Then, howe’er crowns and coronets be rent,
 A virtuous populace may rise the while,
 And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov’d isle.”

It is interesting to note that, as a text for *The Cotter’s Saturday Night*, Burns used Gray’s stanza beginning—“Let not ambition mock their useful toil, . . .”

Page 11. — 1. Is there . . . head. This expression is elliptical. The full meaning is—“Is there any man who hangs his head in apology for honest poverty?”

8. gowd. Gold.

Page 12. — 9. hamely. Homely; humble; simple.

10. hodden grey. Coarse, grey cloth; homespun.

17. birkie. Smart, showy fellow. The term is, of course, full of contempt.

20. coof. Fool; ninny.

22. riband. Ribbon, indicating some decoration or some “order”.

27. aboon. Above.

28. maunna fa' that! Must not or may not obtain that.

36. gree. Prize.

37-40. The idea here expressed by the poet of a democracy founded upon the principle of world brotherhood, while familiar enough today, was new and striking in Burns' day. For much the same exaltation of democracy as that contained in this poem, it is interesting to turn to John Masefield's *A Consecration*.

"SCOTS WHA HAE"

Page 13. — This poem has been called the Scots national anthem. It was composed to be sung to an old air. There is a stirring, martial spirit which grips the reader or singer.

In sending a copy of the poem to Lord Buchan, the poet wrote:

"Independently of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman, I have rarely met with anything in history which interests my feelings as a man equal with the story of Bannockburn. On the one hand, a cruel but able usurper, leading on the finest army in Europe to extinguish the last spark of freedom among a greatly-daring and greatly-injured people: on the other hand, the desperate relics of a gallant nation, devoting themselves to rescue their bleeding country or perish with her. Liberty! thou art a prize truly, and indeed invaluable, for never canst thou be too dearly bought!"

THE BANKS O' DOON

What a contrast with the last poem is presented in the spirit of gentle sadness which is now breathed through this exquisite lyric, full of the grief which only those know who have experienced disappointment in love. The speaker is, of course, a maiden who has been deserted by her unfaithful lover. An Ayrshire legend identifies the heroine of the poem as Pegg Kennedy of Daljarroch. Burns has left us her portrait in *Young Peggy*.

Page 14. — 6. wantons. Flits carelessly, free from anxiety.

11. ilka. Each; every.

15. fause. False.

staw. Stole.

COLERIDGE

Hark! the cadence dies away
On the quiet moonlit sea;
The boatmen rest their oars and say
Miserere Domini.

COLERIDGE.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE was born at Ottery St. Mary in 1772. His father, Rev. John Coleridge, vicar of the parish church and head master of the Grammar School, was a scholarly man from whom the future poet inherited his studious habits. Coleridge said of him: "The image of my father, my revered, kind, learned father, is a religion to me." The boy, who was extremely precocious, was educated at Christ's Hospital, London, and Jesus College, Cambridge. At both School and University he was intensely lonely, read everything he could lay his hands on and gave evidence of the profoundly philosophic character of his mind.

He left the University without taking a degree and we find him soon afterwards fired with enthusiasm over plans formulated by himself and Robert Southey for the establishment of an ideal community. As an initial step towards realizing the scheme, Coleridge and Southey married two sisters who shared their views. The marriage was, for Coleridge, an unfortunate one and, after some eight or nine years of unhappiness, he and his wife parted, seldom to see each other again. The year 1797-98, despite the shadow cast upon it by the growing strength of the poet's habit of taking opium, was in reality his "annus mirabilis". He was then living at Nether Stowey, a neighbour of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. It is possible that the direct influence of the gifted brother and sister upon Coleridge has been exaggerated, but certain it is that Coleridge found in Wordsworth a most congenial mind and the association had a developing influence upon his poetical powers. Coleridge's genius burst suddenly, under these favouring circumstances, into full and perfect bloom. During this year most of the great works upon which rests his poetic fame were either planned or written. Coleridge's life was most varied in its activities: he was alternately Unitarian preacher, lecturer, private secretary and journalist. But through all the latter half of his life, he fought against his "familiar demon", opium. His will power was gradually undermined and he became more and more incapable of sustained effort. De Quincey's words are tragically true of him: "An opium-eater never finishes anything". In 1816, tired out with the struggle, he placed himself under the charge of Dr. Gilman of Highgate, a suburb of London. Under the devoted care of the doctor and his wife, Coleridge regained some of his former peace and enjoyed the company

and conversation of a large group of admiring friends for whom he was "the sage of Highgate". He died in July, 1834, and was buried in Highgate churchyard. Some months earlier, feeling certain of the approach of death, he had written the lines he wished to serve as epitaph:

"O, lift one thought in prayer for S.T.C.—
That he, who many a year with toil of breath
Found death in life, may here find life in death."

Coleridge has left a comparatively small number of finished poems, but these, together with his lectures and particularly his conversation, for which he was very famous, had a profound influence on the thought of his time. Indeed, some critics consider him the most important and influential figure in the English Romantic Movement. Wordsworth, with whom he was associated in the publication of the "Lyrical Ballads" (1798), thought him "the only wonderful man I ever met". Thomas Carlyle visited him during his residence with Dr. Gilman and described him as "a sublime man . . . a king of men." Charles Lamb, to whom we are indebted for a picture of the lonely schoolboy at Christ's Hospital, spoke of the mature man with tender humour as "an archangel a little damaged."

Of the poetry of Coleridge, Walter Pater has written: "A warm poetic joy in everything beautiful, whether it be a moral sentiment, like the friendship of Roland or Leoline, or only the flakes of falling light from the water-snakes—this joy, visiting him, now and again, after sickly dreams, waking or sleeping, as a relief not to be forgotten, and with such a power of felicitous expression that the infection of it passes irresistibly to the reader,—this is the predominant quality of the matter of his poetry, as cadence is the predominant quality of its form."

FROST AT MIDNIGHT

This poem was composed by Coleridge in February, 1798, while he was living at Nether Stowey with the Wordsworths as his neighbours. It is an excellent example of the poet's sensitiveness to nature, and shows clearly his philosophical tendencies. More than once the reader seems to hear an echo of Wordsworth's thought and style, not that there is any direct borrowing, but that the two poets influenced each other in subtle and profound fashion, as was to be expected from two personalities so sensitive and living in a relationship so close as was theirs.

Page 15. — 15. Such a film of soot was taken to foretell the coming of a visitor.

24. While still quite young, Coleridge was sent, after his father's death, to Christ's Hospital, the famous Bluecoat Charity School in London. Here he was fearfully unhappy, disliking the

formal routine of study and in constant terror of the severity of the masters. He was a contemporary of Charles Lamb and De Quincey. For a picture of the school at this time, consult Lamb's *Essays of Elia*.

Page 16. — 38. preceptor. Teacher. He is possibly thinking of one of the masters, Boyer, whom Lamb describes in his *Essays*.

43. sister more beloved. Coleridge here refers to his sister, Ann. From his youth the poet was devoted to her, looking upon her as his truest friend. Her death in 1791 occasioned him great sorrow.

45. Dear babe. The reference is to Hartley Coleridge. The poems of this period contain many references to the child.

51. Coleridge hopes that his son's learning will come to him, not from the formal routine of study in "cloisters dim" and unlovely, but from the contemplation of the changing moods of Nature. This theory which viewed Nature as the great teacher, Coleridge held in common with Wordsworth—Cf. *Three Years She Grew*, pages 52-53.

Page 17. — 66-75. In this beautiful passage note the great intimacy with nature. The reader finds it in Burns and, of course, supremely in Wordsworth. There is no aloofness here: the poet is describing what he has actually seen and loved.

KUBLA KHAN

This remarkable fragment of composition was inspired, as many of Coleridge's poems were, by the poet's reading. He tells us how, on one occasion in 1797, he was reading in a charming old book of travel—*Purchas his Pilgrimage*:—"In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately palace, encompassing sixteen miles of plain ground with a wall, wherein are fertile meadows, pleasant springs, delightful streams and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, and in the midst thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure". From this imaginative passage the poet drifted into sleep. He tells us that he remained asleep for three hours. He was conscious of composing during this time some 200 or 300 lines of poetry. Awaking he still vividly remembered them and "instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he (the author) was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and, on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of

the vision, yet with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the image on the surface of a stream into which a stone had been cast, but alas! without the after restoration of the latter”.

According to Coleridge's own statement, the poem was published “at the request of a poet of great and deserved celebrity”—presumably Byron.

1. Kubla Khan ruled in great splendour in his Chinese capitol of Peking during the 13th century. He founded the Mongol dynasty and became famous for the wealth and culture of his reign.

8. sinuous. Twisting; winding.

13. athwart a cedarn cover. Through a cedar wood.

14. savage. Wild.

25. meandering. Wandering; crooked. The word is derived from “Maiandros”, a very crooked river in Asia Minor.

35. device. Plan; design.

41. Mount Aora seems to be entirely imaginary. It may, however, have come to Coleridge from some of his wide reading.

The imagery of the poem is vague, like landscape seen in dreams, and the fragmentary foreshadowing of plot sets the imagination wandering in endless paths of dreamy thought.

CHRISTABEL

“Christabel” was begun in 1797 and never finished. The poem was published as it now stands in a pamphlet in 1816. In the Preface Coleridge wrote:

“The first part of the following poem was written in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, at Stowey, in the county of Somerset. The second part, after my return from Germany, in the year one thousand eight hundred, at Keswick, Cumberland. Since the latter date, my poetic powers have been, till very lately, in a state of suspended animation. But as, in my very first conception of the tale, I had the whole present to my mind, with the wholeness, no less than with the liveliness of a vision, I trust that I shall be able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come, in the course of the present year.”

Later, in 1820, the poet wrote:

“If I should finish Christabel, I shall certainly extend it and give it new characters and a greater number of incidents. . . . If a genial recurrence of the ray divine should occur for a few

weeks, I shall certainly attempt it. I had the whole of the two cantos in my mind before I began it; certainly the first canto is more perfect, has more of the true, wild weird spirit than the last."

But no such boon was granted to the poet and his final statement concerning the composition is full of pathos:

"The reason of my not finishing *Christabel* is not that I don't know how to do it—for I have, as I always had, the whole plan entire from beginning to end in my mind; but I fear I could not carry on with equal success the execution of the idea, an extremely subtle and difficult one."

The whole question of the difficulty of the theme of *Christabel* and, particularly, of the completion of the poem, is well set forth by Stopford Brooke, who contributed a fine appreciation of the poet's work as introduction to *The Golden Book of Coleridge*:

"It is in a critic's power to analyse the unearthly music of *Kubla Khan*, but I defy the whole body of critics to analyse the music of the first part of *Christabel*. It belongs to the imagination as much as the vision of the poem itself. It is almost a pity—save for a few passages—that the second part was ever written afterwards. The ineffable element has fled from it. The subject presented itself, when first conceived, to Coleridge as a whole. He saw it from beginning to end. It was then he should have written it all, while he still lived in the dim country of the creatures who are neither of earth nor of heaven, while he still possessed the faery music. Short was that time; and so fine and rare were the sound and the thought of the examples we have of its arch-faery poetry, that he never seems to have been able to finish them. He, with his ear, and with his imagination, (which lasted in feeling, but had lost its shaping power), knew better than any one that he could not recover the immeasurable hour when he wrote these things, or when they wrote themselves,

'he on honey-dew had fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.' "

Note throughout the poem the atmosphere of antiquity which the poet has created. A great revival of interest in the Middle Ages was a mark of the Romantic School of Poetry. Collections of old ballads were published and paved the way for such strange productions as "Ossian" and the "Gothic" romances. Coleridge, like other poets of the time, notably Sir Walter Scott and John Keats in his *Eve of St. Agnes*, consciously attempts to create a mediæval setting for his story. One of the means employed by the poet is the vocabulary of the poem which contains many archaic forms of expression. Cf. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Page 19. — 14. During the period of the composition of this poem, Coleridge was living near William and Dorothy Wordsworth at Nether Stowey. He saw much of the gifted pair and their influence upon his developing powers can scarcely be over-estimated.

Dorothy, who was a keen observer of Nature, kept a *Journal*, in which she noted with great simplicity and vividness the impressions made upon her by the beautiful scenery through which she and her companions took their long walks. Reference will be made later to the relation between Dorothy's work and that of her brother. Professor Quiller-Couch, in his lecture on Dorothy Wordsworth, has pointed out the great influence which she exerted on Coleridge. In so doing, the professor quotes several entries from the *Journal*, which certainly seem to lie very close to the source from which Coleridge drew his inspiration for the lovely nature descriptions contained in lines 14 to 52. There need be no direct borrowing, although that is possible. Coleridge, who had an incredible memory, may merely have recalled some particularly memorable things which he and Dorothy noted together on their walk. Whether the phrases which occur in both the *Journal* and the poem were hers or his, need not be discussed here. The interesting thing for the reader to notice is the reaction of these two sensitive, artistic natures to each other.

Dorothy wrote:

"Walked from seven o'clock till half past eight. . . . Only once while we were in the wood the moon burst through the invisible veil which enveloped her, the shadows of the oaks blackened, and their lines became more strongly marked. . . . The manufacturer's dog makes a large, uncouth howl, which it continues many minutes after there is no noise near it but that of the brook. . . .

"March 7th. William and I drank tea at Coleridge's. A cloudy sky. Observed nothing particularly interesting—the distant prospect obscured. One only leaf upon the top of a tree—the sole remaining leaf—danced round and round like a rag blown by the wind. . . .

"March 24th. Coleridge, the Chesters, and Ellen Cruickshank called. We walked with them through the wood. . . . A duller night than last night; a sort of white shade over the blue sky. The stars dim. The spring continues to advance very slowly. . . . The crooked arm of the old oak tree points upwards to the moon. . . .

"25th (next evening). Walked to Coleridge's after tea. Arrived at home at one o'clock. The night cloudy but not dark."

Page 21. — 78. meet. Becoming; suitable.

Page 22. — 92. iwis. Certainly. This is an old adverb. It is often written erroneously "I wis" as if it were the first person singular of the Anglo-Saxon verb to know and meant "I know".

109. withal. In addition.

Page 23. — 129. belike. Probably; perhaps; apparently.

131-132. Note that Christabel assists the lady to enter her home. Coleridge is here making use of an old belief that evil spirits could not enter an inhabited dwelling uninvited.

Page 24. — Notice the ominous tokens which attend the entrance of Geraldine—the mastiff's angry growl as she lies sleeping and the sudden flame leaping up in the apparently dead hearth.

156. brands. Burning sticks.

174. In Mediaeval times and, indeed, long afterwards, floors were covered with sand or rushes, even in houses of the very wealthy. Carpets and cloth floor-coverings were extremely rare.

Page 25. — 204. she. Geraldine.

205. Peak and pine! A common form of curse used by witches who had the power to make mortals, against whom their enmity was aroused, grow thin and waste away.—Cf. *Macbeth*, I, 3.

Page 26. — 212. her. Christabel's. Geraldine is addressing Christabel's mother.

Page 27. — 249. cincture. Girdle.

258. assay. Attempt; endeavour.

Page 28. — 288. bale. Evil.

Page 29. — 306. tairn. Tarn; small mountain lake.

Page 30. — 332. matin bell. Morning bell as distinguished from the vesper bell which called the devout to evening prayers.

341. beads. Of his rosary.

344. The place names used in the poem (Wyndermere, Langdale Pike, Borodale, Tryermaine) are actually taken from the Lake District. They add to the uncanniness of the whole poem by seeming to give "a local habitation and a name" to events which should have taken place only in the dim regions of fairy land.

Page 32. — 408-426. These lines are justly famous. Coleridge considered them the sweetest and most beautiful lines he had ever written.

414. *divine*: Guess.

Page 33. — 425. *ween*. Think.

445. *kenned*. Knew; recognized.

Page 34. — 474. *the spell*. Cf. lines 267-278.

Page 35. — 489. *solemn vest*. Clothing or vestments befitting a ceremonial occasion.

493. In his excitement and delight, the Baron sees Bracy already on the road, hastening on his errand.

Page 36. — 522. *hail*. Greeting; salutation.

Page 37. — 551. *couched*. Lay.

Page 40. — Some critics consider it highly unlikely that the lines published as the conclusion to Part II were really intended to serve that purpose. They were probably written later: Coleridge sent a copy of them in a letter to his friend, Southey, early in 1801. There is, of course, a close enough connection in thought between Part II and the disputed lines.

WORDSWORTH

“He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loos’d our heart in tears.
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth;
Smiles broke from us and we had ease.”

—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE LIFE of Wordsworth may be divided into four fairly clearly defined periods—

1. The period from his birth in 1770 at Cockermouth, Cumberland, to 1787, the year in which he entered Cambridge. During this period the boy was supremely happy. Living as he did in a small village in the lovely Lake District, the future poet was almost constantly in touch with nature. In most respects he was a very normal boy, save for the fact that he loved solitude and was touched to an extraordinary degree by the beauty of Nature.
2. The period extending from 1787 to 1797. In 1787 he entered Cambridge. There he read a good deal and studied in a rather desultory fashion, the chief impression of the University being made by a group of young men of radical views. During his vacations he visited the continent and there met many of those who were preaching the philosophy of revolution. So enthusiastic did he become, that he joined the Girondists and would undoubtedly have shared their political fate had not his English friends and relations interfered and recalled him. Towards the close of this period, his ardour was rather suddenly cooled by the excesses practised by the Revolutionary party in France and the rise to arrogant personal power of Napoleon.
3. The brief period from 1797 to 1799. These three years are perhaps the most interesting of his life — certainly so from the artistic point of view. At this time he was living at Alfoxden and came under the influence of his sister Dorothy, and his neighbour, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It is not surprising that this was the period of his greatest lyric productivity. In 1798 he and Coleridge published the *Lyrical Ballads*, which was to exert an important influence upon the poetry of the Nineteenth Century. During these three years Wordsworth wrote almost all of his finest and best known lyrics.
4. The forth period comprises the last fifty years of his life. Disgusted by the practical outcome of revolutionary theorising, he retired to the Lake District and there, almost without interruption, spent the remaining years of his life. He was enabled to do this by the generosity of a friend, Raisley Calvert, who left

him a legacy of a few hundred pounds. His means were never sufficient to allow extravagance. The family lived very frugally, never far from poverty. Wordsworth's poetry brought him little financial return. Indeed, it brought him little return of any kind, save the warm support of a small group of loyal friends and the scorn and ridicule of the critics. During the last decade, he attracted more favourable attention. The popularity of Byron and Scott had largely died out and the dominion of Tennyson had not yet been established. There came, consequently, a great wave of enthusiasm for Wordsworth and he was acclaimed as the greatest living poet. In 1843, on the death of Southey, he was made poet laureate. The Universities honoured him with degrees. By all of this Wordsworth was as little moved as he had formerly been by the neglect and scorn of the public. He continued to live quietly in his beloved Lake District and died there in 1850. He was buried in the churchyard at Grasmere.

Such is a brief chronicle of the outward life of Wordsworth. What is infinitely more important and significant is the story of his development as a priest of Nature, and this story he has made the main theme of his verse.

Wordsworth ranks among the greatest of our lyric poets. In his finest lyrics there is a simplicity and a convincing sincerity that makes an immediate appeal to the reader. His poems are, with few exceptions, intensely subjective. For him all good poetry was "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling." Wordsworth held that it was the especial gift of the poet, by reason of a sensibility keener than that possessed by the average man, to perceive the universe emotionally. It was his high privilege through his compositions, to share this emotional reaction to the phenomena of life and nature with other men, thus turning their thoughts from the mechanical aspects of existence and inducing them to yield to the influence of the beauty and joy which have their dwelling-place in Nature. Such was the poetic creed of Wordsworth and in the spirit of that creed he lived and wrote.

On the medallion in Grasmere Church the following tribute is inscribed:

To The Memory Of
William Wordsworth,
A True Philosopher and Poet,
Who By The Special Gift And Calling Of
Almighty God,
Whether He Discoursed On Man Or Nature,
Failed Not To Lift Up The Heart
To Holy Things,
Tired Not Of Maintaining The Cause
Of The Poor And Simple:
And So In Perilous Times Was Raised Up
To Be A Chief Minister

Not Only Of Noblest Poesy,
 But Of High And Sacred Truth.
 This Memorial
 Is Placed Here By His Friends and Neighbours
 In Testimony Of
 Respect, Affection, And Gratitude.
 Anno 1851.

THE PRELUDE

The Prelude was begun in 1799 and completed in 1805. Wordsworth published it with the sub-title, "Growth of a Poet's Mind; An Autobiographical Poem". In his preparatory note he said:

"Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such an employment.

"As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. . . .

"The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labor which he had proposed to himself; and the two works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the Ante-chapel has to the body of a Gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor pieces, which have been long before the public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive reader to have such connection with the main work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices."

The poem to which Wordsworth intended *The Prelude* to serve as introduction was never completed. Of its comprehensive plan, only *The Excursion* and the first book of the first part of *The Recluse* were realized.

The Prelude is divided into 14 books. The selection published here is from Book I, *Childhood and School-time*.

Page 41. — 3. my birth-place. Cockermouth, Cumberland.

4. beloved Vale. Esthwaite where Wordsworth was sent at the age of 9 to attend the Grammar School at Hawkshead.

10. springes. Snares; traps for birds.

21-25. The truly remarkable thing about Wordsworth's nature poetry is not any originality of description, but the striking spiritual and mental effect which experiences in nature always had upon his sensitive mind and soul.

Page 42. — 26. cultured. Cultivated.

28. lodge. Nest.

28-30. Though our aim (to rob birds' nests) was mean, yet the result (the perception by Wordsworth of some new aspect of Nature's beauty) was by no means ignoble.

40. Dust as we are. Though we are mortal; in spite of "this muddy vesture of decay."

41. Like harmony in music, i.e., from discord to concord, apparently discordant elements passing over and being "resolved" into a full harmony.

Page 43. — 57. her. Nature.

64-66. No other poet has achieved the power to portray the beauties of nature in an equally effortless, simple and direct style. It is as if Nature herself were speaking through Wordsworth's lines.

79. instinct. Alive; animated by an inner impulse.

80. struck. Struck with the oars.

81-85. The experience described here can be realized by anyone who will row out into a lake which is surrounded by low ridges of hills which, for a time, hide the higher peaks behind them.

87. covert. Shelter.

Page 44. — 93. modes of being. Forms of existence.

104-114. Wordsworth had a sincere and profound belief in the power of Nature to teach humanity, to mould man's character until he responded to every mood of the world about him, feeling alike its beauty and terror. Cf. *Three Years She Grew*, page 52; *Tintern Abbey*, page 50, lines 126-137.

112. discipline. Training.

114. beatings of the heart. Stirrings of the emotion of joy or fear.

115. this fellowship. This communion with Nature.

Page 45. — 134. games confederate. Group games such as crack-the whip, hare and hounds, tag, shinny.

150. reflex. Reflection.

152. glassy plain. Ice.

Page 46. — 160. diurnal round. Daily rotation.

LINES WRITTEN ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY

It was in the year 1796 that Wordsworth and Coleridge came to know each other. Finding many interests in common, they soon became fast friends. In 1797 William and his sister, Dorothy, rented a small house and moved to Alfoxden, in order to be near the Coleridges. Thereupon began an association which has meant much for English Literature. All three were great lovers of nature, and on the long walks which they took together, Wordsworth and Coleridge discussed theories of poetry and art in general. The first practical result was the publication, in 1798, of the *Lyrical Ballads*. This work attracted very little attention at first, except among a few discerning readers, and even these did not realize what an epoch making event the volume's appearance was to prove.

In the Preface to the first edition which opens with the memorable sentence,—“It is the honourable characteristic of poetry that its materials are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind”, Wordsworth briefly outlined his theory of Poetry. This he enlarged in the Preface to the second edition, which was published in 1800. Here he declared that Poetry must be freed from the conventions which had cramped and fettered her—conventions, not only of subject matter, but also of diction and style. Wordsworth thus cut away from the poetic school of the preceding generations, the classical school of Dryden, Pope and Addison, and set himself at the head of a new movement—the Romantic Revival—for which the way had been made ready by Gray, Goldsmith and Burns.

But the volume was memorable not for theory alone: it contained poems as various in style and subject matter as Coleridge's fanciful *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Wordsworth's *Idiot Boy* and *Lines Composed above Tintern Abbey*. Of the last named poem, Myers said: “The essential spirit of the *Lines near Tintern Abbey* was for practical purposes, as new to mankind as the essential spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. Not the isolated expression of moral ideas, but their fusion into a whole in one memorable personality, is that which connects them forever with a single name. Therefore it is that Wordsworth is venerated; because to so many men—

indifferent, it may be, to literary or poetical effect, as such—he has shown by the subtle intensity of his own emotion how the contemplation of Nature can be made a revealing agency, like Love or Prayer—an opening, if indeed there be any opening, into the transcendent world”.

Wordsworth himself, writing of the *Tintern Abbey Lines* said: “No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol.” It was published almost immediately after in the little volume of which so much has been said in these Notes.

Page 46. — 1. Wordsworth visited this locality, alone and on foot, in 1793. The Valley of the Wye River is one of the loveliest bits of river scenery in England.

17. wreaths of smoke . . . among the trees. There can scarcely be a Canadian who does not know how beautiful and how symbolic of peace smoke drifting up among the dark trees can be.

Page 47. — 20. vagrant dwellers. Such as Gypsies.

23. The text here has been altered to advantage. In the first edition it read:

“Though absent long,
These forms of beauty have not been for me,
As is a landscape to a blind man’s eye”.

25. As . . . blind man’s eye, *i.e.*, meaningless because he cannot perceive even their physical beauty.

26-50. For Wordsworth Nature had a soothing power, bringing joy to his heart long after the moment of actual perception of the beautiful object was past. By the power of recollection, all the loveliness of Nature lived again in the poet’s mind, quieting and soothing his feverish spirit and leading him through peaceful meditation into a mood of abstraction where, the actual physical world for a time forgotten, he saw into the very heart of the mystery of human existence, perceiving profound truths which ordinarily he missed.

38. sublime. Lofty; noble.

42. blessed. Happy.

43. affections. Emotions.

44. corporeal frame. Body.

Page 48. — 56. Have depressed me by weighing down my spirits.

63. The picture which he carries in memory comes to life again.

65-67. Compare the last stanza of *The Daffodils*, page 56.

67-113. In this important passage Wordsworth divides his life as a lover of Nature into three sections:

(1) the period when, as a boy, he felt little but the physical thrill of nature, joy in wild games and boyish pleasures;

(2) the period of adolescence when nature spoke to him through his emotions: beauty of colour, form and sound intoxicated him;

(3) the final stage in his development when Nature spoke to his mind. He has lived much and seen much of man's existence, his joy and sorrow, his hope and despair. He can no longer look upon Nature with mere emotional enjoyment.

"The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality; . . .
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears".

He has come finally to the point where he sees beyond material things and perceives the great harmonising Spirit which underlies all surface manifestations, uniting and giving meaning to all the scattered phenomena of life and nature.

Page 49. — 110. the language of the sense. The interpretation of nature by means of the senses.

115. genial. Cf. note on Gray's *Elegy*, page 2, line 52.

117. thou. Dorothy Wordsworth. Dorothy was a few years younger than her brother. Reference has already been made to their close comradeship and its effect upon William. Throughout her life she exercised a refining, humanizing influence upon him. He pays a tribute to her in many of his poems. Dorothy, according to her brother, never attained to the spiritual and highly philosophical attitude towards Nature that he reached. She remained always a creature of emotion, registering with the most delicate precision the impressions of natural beauty.

Page 50. — 119-120. I catch the language of my former heart. I feel the strong emotional appeal of nature which I knew formerly.

128. inform. Mould.

133. greetings where no kindness is. The formal salutation of those who really care nothing about you.

137. blessings. Joy.

146-149. These lines were strangely prophetic of the fate of Dorothy.

152. past existence. My own past life. Cf. lines 119 to 123.

LUCY POEMS

There has been much discussion, particularly of late, as to the identity of the maiden whom Wordsworth has celebrated in the Lucy Poems, of which four are included in this volume. Various suggestions have been made, but, perhaps, the best guess is that Lucy had no existence outside the imagination of the poet, that she was an ideal child of Nature, compounded of elements from many people he had met, notably his sister.

The Lucy Poems, because of their simplicity and directness, belong to the small body of truly great and successful lyric art. The success of Wordsworth here is paralleled only a few times in our own Literature.

The following poems were written by Wordsworth during a sojourn in Germany.

"SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS"

Note the simplicity and exquisite beauty of style in this poem, and the skill with which Wordsworth avoids the cheaply sentimental. The sorrow of bereaved love is expressed with brief poignancy.

"THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER"

Page 52. — Palgrave, including this poem in his *Golden Treasury*, gave it the sub-title, *The Education of Nature*. It contains, perhaps, the most complete and the simplest statement that Wordsworth made of his belief that nature could teach man if he would adopt towards her a "wise passiveness" and yield himself to her leading.

8. Both law and impulse. Nature will be for Lucy a power which will, at times, check and restrain her, and, at other times, provide her with stimulus to act.

Page 53. — 18. mute insensate things. Things which ordinarily are taken to have no feeling or sensitiveness.

19-36. Note here the simplicity and beauty with which Wordsworth describes nature.

“A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL”

Page 54. — Wordsworth says that for a time it did not occur to him that Lucy could be like other people, feeling the touch of years, subject to the power of death.

7. diurnal course. Daily rotation.

THE SOLITARY REAPER

The Solitary Reaper is the 8th of a number of poems which Wordsworth entitled *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland*. In introduction of these he says: “Mr. Coleridge, my sister, and myself, started together from Town-end to make a Tour in Scotland. Poor Coleridge was, at that time, in bad spirits, and somewhat too much in love with his own dejection; and he departed from us, as is recorded in my Sister’s Journal, soon after we left Loch Lomond”.

In the manuscript of Wilkinson’s *Tours to the British Mountains*, Wordsworth read the following passage, which certainly seems to be the genesis of his inspiration. “Passed a female who was reaping alone; she sang in Erse as she bended over her sickle; the sweetest human voice I ever heard; her strains were tenderly melancholy, and felt delicious, long after they were heard no more”.

THE DAFFODILS

Page 55. — “Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The Daffodils grew and still grow on the margin of Ullswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves”.

Under date of April 15, 1802, we find the following entry in Dorothy’s *Journal*: “When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park, we saw a few daffodils close to the water-side. . . . As we went along there were more and yet more, and at last, under the boughs of the trees, we saw that there was a long belt of them along the shore, about the breadth of a country turnpike road. I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about and above them; some rested their heads on these stones as on a pillow for weariness; and the rest tossed and reeled and danced and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind that

blew upon them over the lake: they looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing”.

Page 56. — 20. vacant. Carefree.

21. inward eye. Memory and imagination.

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN

Wordsworth heartily disliked the city. He says that *The Reverie* was inspired by “my observation of the affecting music of these birds hanging in this way in the London streets during the freshness and stillness of the Spring morning”. Such a sight would take Wordsworth back to his country glades.

It is quite characteristic of Wordsworth, and in keeping with the theory he enunciated in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, that he should make the humble Susan the central character in his poem.

6-12. Poor Susan has a vision of the mountains and glades of her country home.

13-16. Susan’s escape from the tedium of the city has been momentary only: the vision fades as she returns to the actual facts of her drab city existence.

TO A SKYLARK

Page 57. — Was written at Rydal Mount.

3. aspire. Strive upward.

ELEGIAC STANZAS

In 1805 Wordsworth suffered a very great sadness in the loss of his brother, John, who was shipwrecked and drowned in the English Channel. To this brother the poet had been especially devoted. He says of him: “I never wrote a line without thought of giving him pleasure.” It is the thought of this great loss that colours his *Elegiac Stanzas*. Concerning the picture which was the immediate source of the poem’s inspiration, Wordsworth has left us the following interesting note:

“Sir George Beaumont painted two pictures of this subject, one of which he gave to Mrs. Wordsworth, saying she ought to have it; but Lady Beaumont interfered, and after Sir George’s death she gave it to Sir Uvedale Price, in whose house at Foxley I have seen it.”

7. Image. Reflection in the water.

9-12. The calm of the ocean seemed to be a thing not influenced by changes of season, etc.

Page 58 — 14-16. Wordsworth here speaks of that strange, personal element which the subjective artist puts into his work, whether it be poem or painting. It is a sort of romantic glamour which invests the object he is describing and differentiates his treatment of the subject from a cold, photographic transcript of Nature.

26. Elysian quiet. Heavenly peace. The Elysian fields were, in Greek mythology, the abodes of the blessed after death.

36. A deep distress. The loss of his brother in a ship-wreck. humanized. Given new and broader sympathy for humanity.

Page 59. — 54. Housed in a dream. Living in a fool's paradise. Kind. Humanity.

THE SONNET

The Sonnet is one of the brief lyric forms; it consists of 14 lines. It was popular in Italy in Renaissance times, having been employed by Dante, Tasso, and with very great success by Petrarch. The form was introduced into England during the reign of Henry VIII by two travelling scholars, Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey. It became immensely popular and has been employed by our poets ever since.

The regular sonnet form is usually referred to as the Italian or Petrarchan Sonnet, and has been the most commonly employed. This was the form used by Milton. In it the 14 lines are divided into an octave and a sestet. The rhyming scheme of the octave is usually a b b a a b b a, of the sestet, c d c d c d or c d e c d e. Our poets have taken considerable liberty with the Sonnet rhyming scheme, and the reader will therefore find a good deal of variety in their actual practice. The octave is usually employed to set forth the subject in some detail, and the sestet makes a reflection upon it.

In the Miltonic Sonnet the division between octave and sestet is not as sharply defined as in the Petrarchan.

Shakespeare composed a long sequence of sonnets. In so doing he altered and adapted the form. In his sonnet (see the Appendix), we find a sequence of three quatrains with the rhyming scheme a b a b, c d c d, e f e f. The concluding two lines form a couplet, which is usually epigrammatic in character.

The sonnet form is best adapted to use for occasional writing (this is particularly the case with the Petrarchan Sonnet) or for setting forth briefly and concisely a philosophic reflection. True, Wordsworth has used it successfully for nature description, but only in cases where the description is heavily laden with thought and emotion. In *Scorn not the Sonnet* (published in the Appendix) Wordsworth makes an excellent defence of this literary form, and incidentally gives a fairly comprehensive account of its history.

The Sonnet was not popular among the classical poets of the 17th and 18th centuries. There was a great revival of interest in it, however, among the romanticists, and this enthusiasm continues to the present. Noteworthy examples of modern sonneteers are Rupert Brooke and John Masefield.

COMPOSED ON THE BEACH NEAR CALAIS

Page 59. — Dorothy writes: "Arrived at Calais at four in the morning of July 31. Delightful walks in the evenings: seeing far off in the west the coast of England, like a cloud, crested with Dover Castle, the Evening Star—the glory of the sky".

Page 60 — 9. Dear Child! The identity of the poet's companion to whom he refers here is not absolutely certain. For years it was held that Wordsworth was referring to his sister, Dorothy. This has been questioned by recent investigators.

12. in Abraham's bosom. In the presence of God.

" THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US "

Page 60. — The idea expressed here is commonly found in Wordsworth's poems. He believed that contact with the world of business, with its fret and worry, unfitted men for communion with Nature, thus cutting them off from the great source of joy and blessing.

4. We have given our hearts away. We have sacrificed our ability to feel and appreciate beauty.

9-14. Wordsworth would rather be a pagan who felt the nearness of Nature than a christian who saw nothing in it to kindle his enthusiasm.

13-14. For the Greeks all Nature was presided over by spirits. Proteus and Triton were two sea deities in Greek Mythology.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

Wordsworth says he wrote this Sonnet "on the roof of a coach on my way to France". As usual Dorothy's *Journal* provides us with additional interesting details. "July 30—Left London between five and six o'clock of the morning outside the Dover Coach. A beautiful morning. The City, St. Paul's, with the river—a multitude of boats, made a beautiful sight as we crossed Westminster Bridge; the houses not overhung by their clouds of smoke, and were spread out endlessly; yet the sun shone brightly with such a pure light that there was something like the purity of one of Nature's own grand spectacles."

Wordsworth always had an eye to see and a heart to feel beauty. In this Sonnet he is moved by the striking contrast between the morning peace of the City and the stir and bustle which fill it during the day.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON

Page 61. — This Sonnet was one of those written by Wordsworth in the cause of Liberty. It was called forth by the steady encroachments of Napoleon's power in Europe. When, finally, the freedom of Switzerland was endangered, Wordsworth cried out against the "tyrant", seeing in the fate of the ancient Swiss republic a warning of what might befall Britain.

1. one is of the sea. Britain.
2. One of the mountains. Switzerland.
5. Tyrant. Napoleon.
11. high-souled Maid. Liberty.

BYRON

“With shivering heart the strife we saw
Of passion with Eternal Law;
And yet with reverential awe
We watched the fount of fiery life
Which served for that Titanic strife.”

—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

GEORGE NOEL GORDON, Lord Byron, the most impulsive and rebellious spirit among the English Romanticists, was born in London, January 22, 1788. His father was a reckless and dissipated spendthrift — his mother a Scottish heiress, daughter of the Gordons, a highland family of proud and aristocratic stock. The father, having squandered his wife's fortune, left her and her son. The boy was brought up among his mother's relatives, the object alternately of his mother's foolish indulgence and impulsive and irrational temper. In 1798 a grand-uncle died and left the young lad heir to Newstead Abbey and one of the oldest baronial titles in England. Meanwhile, Byron's character was being formed. He had inherited from both his parents characteristics which were to dog him throughout his life — inordinate vanity and love of flattery, a passionate and ungovernable temper, a reckless generosity of nature and an extremely weak will. Extraordinarily handsome, he acquired a romantic sort of pathos owing to lameness due to a misshapen foot. It is little wonder that the poor youth, sought after and idolised by men and women of shallow character, became the victim of his environment and that the least admirable traits in his complex nature were most highly developed. He was educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge. While still at the University, Byron published a volume of poems which was promptly suppressed because of the license of expression employed in the contents. A few months later, in 1809, appeared *Hours of Idleness*. The volume was violently attacked by both Scottish and English critics. This provoked Byron's reply in the brilliant and bitter satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, in which the young poet attacked nearly all the literary men of his day including Wordsworth, Scott and Southey, the poet-laureate. In 1809 Byron left England to make a tour of Europe and the Orient. He was absent for two years and, on his return, published the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. It achieved an immediate success. Byron suddenly found himself one of the most popular figures in London Society. His vanity was fed by lavish flattery. He was pleased to style himself “the grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme”. It was easy for the public to see the romantic young nobleman under the thin disguise of the melancholy, pathetic Childe Harold, the restless pilgrim seeking to numb the aching of his heart which was

constantly eaten away by an unrelenting, mysterious and nameless sorrow, and Byron, with his love of posing, "played up" to the public. But his extreme popularity was to be short-lived. In 1815 he married an English heiress, Miss Milbanke, who left him suddenly a year later, making no definite charges but leaving everything to the ready imagination of a fickle Society. Already people had begun to penetrate the veil of romantic mystery with which the young poet chose to surround himself, and had returned to report that the idol's feet were quite definitely of clay. Public opinion was quick to change and Byron became a virtual outcast from Society. Disgusted and defiant, he left England in 1816, never to return. He spent the first years of his "exile" in Italy. There he met and came to love Shelley. There, too, he associated himself with the Italian revolutionists. The English lord's money and social prestige were gladly accepted by the latter. During these years he finished *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, *Don Juan*, *The Prisoner of Chillon* and many other poems, in most of which we see the bitter resentment of his treatment in England which ate like a canker in the poet's mind. In 1824 he went to Greece and there threw himself and a large part of his fortune into the cause of the Greeks who were struggling to free themselves from the power of the Turks. He died during the same year of a fever contracted at Missolonghi.

Such is briefly the story of one of the most complex and fascinating figures in English Literature. Side by side with his weak will and dissipated character, we find a man of generous impulses and a poet dowered with truly remarkable lyric power. Byron wrote too much and too hurriedly. Consequently his work, which is full of fire and energy, is frequently marred by crude blemishes. He was held in the highest estimation on the Continent. The Italian patriot, Mazzini, looked upon him as an ambassador who unconsciously acted as an interpreter of Britain to Europe. "From him", Mazzini says, "dates the sympathy of all the true-hearted amongst us for this land of liberty, whose true vocation he so worthily represented among the oppressed". Hearing of the poet's death, Goethe is reported to have said: "The English may think of Byron as they please: but this is certain, that they can show no poet who is to be compared with him. He is different from all the others, and for the most part, greater."

LACHIN Y GAIR

This poem appeared in *Hours of Idleness*, Byron's first volume, which was published when he was nineteen years old.

Byron was descended on his mother's side from the Gordons of Gicht in Aberdeenshire. Owing to his father's financial difficulties, the child was raised among these relations until he was ten years of age. This experience influenced the future poet profoundly. In the poem, *Lachin y Gair*, he recalls, with no doubt a good deal

of exaggeration, the impressions made upon him by Highland scenery and the history connected with it.

The poem is interesting for other than biographical reasons. Through its spirited lines there runs the romantic yearning for the wild, the uncultivated as opposed to the formal and conventional. During the early 19th Century both poets and philosophers idealised the strange and startling as a means of escape from the monotony of regular, conventional life.

Page 62. — 2. minions. Pampered darlings; favourites.

5. Caledonia. Scotland.

10. plaid. Byron, in a note, drew attention to the proper Scotch pronunciation of the word—not “plad”, but “plade” (to rhyme with “glade”).

17. In the following stanzas the poet tells us he is referring to his “maternal ancestors, the Gordons, many of whom fought for the unfortunate Prince Charles, better known by the name of the Young Pretender”.

25. Ill-starr’d. Ill-fated. The phrase contains an allusion to the theories of the astrologers who taught that the stars exerted an influence over men’s destinies.

Page 63. — 27. Culloden. The last great battle in the struggle of the Jacobites to establish Prince Charles as King. The battle is famous in history for the terrible slaughter it witnessed.

30. Braemar. A district in the Highlands.

31. pibroch. The bagpipes. The word really should indicate the music of the instrument but here is used for the instrument itself.

36. Albion. England.

“ THE ISLES OF GREECE ”

This fine lyric is taken from the Third Canto of Byron’s last great poem, *Don Juan*. In this poem, as in *Childe Harold*, the central figure, Don Juan, is really the poet himself. The composition is full of fantastic, romantic incidents. It is very long, consisting of sixteen cantos, and by no means of even merit. There are truly magnificent passages of great lyric intensity, among which the song, *The Isles of Greece*, is justly one of the best known.

Don Juan was written during the period of Byron's "exile". It contains savage, almost vicious, satirical attacks upon English Society, upon social, political and literary heroes, such as Wellington, Southey (the poet laureate), and Wordsworth. As may be imagined, the poem, in spite of its brilliant style, was not received with general favour by the British public and added not a little to the poet's unpopularity.

It is worth noting that, when Byron wrote *Don Juan*, he was already interested in the struggle which Greece was waging against her conquerors, the Turks,—a cause in which he was later to play an active and a fatal part.

In the song a Greek patriot recalls with shame the past glory of his country which now wears the chains of slavery.

2. **Sappho.** A famous Greek poetess (6th Century B.C.). Unfortunately none of her poems have survived, except such fragments as occur as quotations in the works of other Greek writers who gave her a place of preëminence among lyric poets.

4. **Delos.** One of the group of islands known as the Cyclades. Delos was said to have risen out of the sea at the command of Poseidon. It was in mythology the birthplace of Phoebus Apollo, god of music and the sun.

7. **Scian muse.** The muse of Homer, who is reputed to have been born at Scio or Chios.

Teian muse. The muse of Anacreon, whose home was in Teos.

10. **place of birth.** Greece, which is now for the most part satisfied to live in slavery, forgetful of the great achievement of the past.

12. "Islands of the Blest." "The Happy Isles" Cf. *Ulysses*, page 121, line 63—the Greek paradise. These islands were thought to exist somewhere beyond the Straits of Gibraltar.

Page 64. — 13. **Marathon.** The scene of a great battle in the struggle of the Greeks against the Persians (490 B.C.). The name has remained as a beacon in all the course of history.

19. **A king.** Xerxes, the Persian King, whose army was defeated by the Greeks at Salamis.

40-42. The inhabitants of Sparta were famous among the Greeks for their soldiership and prowess in war. This was the outcome of most rigid discipline and training to which they submitted.

42. Thermopylae is as famous as Marathon. Here three hundred Spartans gave their lives in a courageous and doggedly faithful attempt to hold the mountain pass against fearful odds.

Page 65. — 50. Samian wine. Wine from the Island of Samos.

52. Scio's vine. See note on line 7.

54. Bacchanal. Worshipper of Bacchus, the god of wine: here, a carouser, a drinker.

55-56. Pyrrhus taught his country many great and valuable lessons. The singer regrets that today the Greeks have forgotten the stern lessons of military tactics they had been taught and remember only the dance and other forms of pleasure.

59. Cadmus. The mythical founder of the famous City of Thebes. He is said to have introduced the Greek alphabet.

63-64. Anacreon. Referred to above, line 7. He was a poet at the court of the tyrant of Samos, Polycrates. Much of Anacreon's poetry was written in honour of Bacchus; hence "it" (wine) can be said to have inspired his song.

65. Our masters now are the Turks.

69. Miltiades led the Greeks to victory at Marathon. True he was a despotic tyrant, but under his rule his country gained great military glory. Now the Greeks serve a tyrant, the Turk, who brings them not glory but the shame of slavery.

Page 66. — 74. In this stanza Byron makes an elaborate reference to the history of Greece. Suli was a fortress and Parga a harbour in Albania. From this district the Dorian tribes moved down to make their conquest of the Peloponnesus in the 13th and 14th centuries B.C. Byron also refers to the so called "return of the Heraclidae"—i.e., the children of Hercules.

79. Franks. The French.

80. a king. Louis XVIII.

91. Sunium. A point at the extreme south of Attica,—the modern Colonnos.

96. Dash down the wine cup if it is to kindle men to no feats of bravery, but merely to incite them to practices of luxury and self-indulgence.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Childe Harold, one of the longest of Byron's poems, was written as a result of the poet's various journeys in Europe and the impressions which, on these occasions, crowded in upon his mind. It is in four Cantos and is by far the best known and most highly esteemed of Byron's work. The poet chose to make the poem centre around a fictitious character, Childe Harold (*childe* = knight), whose adventures are supposed to be the subject matter of the composition. In reality, the poem deals with the experiences of the poet himself, whose character constantly shows through the thin mask of the wandering knight. Indeed, in the Fourth Canto, the title is quite a misnomer, since the Childe scarcely appears at all, and it is Byron who conducts us through Italy, pausing to draw our attention to some memorable historical detail or to indulge in melancholy, self-centred reflection.

The materials for the first two Cantos were collected during a trip which began in the Summer of 1809 and took Byron through Portugal, Spain, Malta, Albania and Greece. Returning to England in 1811, Byron showed some of his friends the manuscript of a great many stanzas which he had written. They were received so enthusiastically, that the poet was encouraged to supplement them and publish the first part of the *Childe Harold*, which he did on February 29, 1812.

The phenomenal success which this work achieved took Byron by surprise. He himself said of the experience, "I awoke one morning and found myself famous".

In April, 1816, Byron again left England—this time to visit Belgium, Germany and Switzerland. While in Switzerland, he saw much of the poet Shelley, and was inspired to artistic effort by his influence. During this tour, he wrote a large part of the Third Canto, which he published in the latter part of the year.

The Fourth Canto records the poet's experience during a six weeks' journey from Venice to Rome in the Spring of 1817. This part of the poem was largely written on the poet's return to Venice, and was published in January, 1818.

The verse form used by Byron in *Childe Harold* is known as the Spenserian Stanza. It is so called because of the fact that Spenser used it in his long allegorical poem, *The Faerie Queene*. The stanza, which consists of nine lines, is one of the longest and

most complicated in English. The first eight lines are pentameters. They employ three rhyming sounds grouped as follows—a b a b b c b c. These eight lines are followed by a hexameter or Alexandrine which rhymes with lines 6 and 8.

Because of its length and fine concluding cadence of the long last line, the Spenserian Stanza is very well suited to descriptive writing. It is possible, within the limits of the stanza, to give a great many details and present a complete picture. The form is not so well adapted for use in rapid narrative although, at times, as in *The Eve of Waterloo*, Byron achieved a good deal of success with it in this type of composition.

The Spenserian Stanza has been used very successfully by Tennyson in *The Lotos-Eaters*, and by Keats in *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

From CANTO III

"THE EVE OF WATERLOO"

Byron here refers to a famous incident in history—a ball given in Brussels by the Duchess of Richmond on June 15, 1815. This was not, properly speaking, the eve of Waterloo, but of the Battle of Quatre-Bras which was the first of a series of engagements which culminated on June 18, in the great battle at Waterloo.

In describing the scene, Byron has employed that license which we must ever allow to poets. The officers who attended the ball had knowledge of the grim contest awaiting them on the morrow, but the general public was taken by surprise. The student of literature will be interested to compare Byron's description of the events leading up to Waterloo with those contained in Thackeray's novel, *Vanity Fair*.

2. Belgium's capital. Brussels.

Page 67. — 20. Brunswick's fated chieftain. Frederick William, Duke of Brunswick, nephew of George III. He was killed the following day at Quatre-Bras. His father had fallen in the campaign of 1806 against Napoleon.

26. quell. Satisfy.

Page 68. — 35. those mutual eyes. Those eyes which exchanged glances. In this phrase Byron has used in its correct sense a word which is frequently used incorrectly today.

46. "Camerons' gathering". Literally the war cry of the Highland Clan of the Camerons. Here it is used, doubtless, to refer to the music of the bag-pipes as the Scotch regiments marched away to the battle.

47. Lochiel. Chief of the Camerons.

Albyn. Gaelic name for Scotland.

49. pibroch. See page 63, line 31.

54. Evan. Evan Dhu who fought against Cromwell.

Donald. Evan's grandson, the hero of Culloden, where he was wounded. John Cameron, a great-great-grandson, was mortally wounded at Quatre-Bras.

55. Ardennes. The forest between Brussels and Waterloo. It is said to be a remnant of the Forest of Arden, scene of the greater part of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.

CANTO IV

Page 69. — 1. The Bridge of Sighs is a covered bridge connecting the Ducal Palace and the State Prison. Through it condemned prisoners walked to their miserable dungeons.

8. The lion was the emblem of St. Mark, the patron Saint of Venice. It was therefore chosen as the emblem of the city itself, and was used frequently in architectural ornamentation.

9. Venice is built on 117 islands. The early founders of the city fled into the marshy land and over into the islands at the head of the Adriatic in an attempt to escape the invasions of the Huns under Attila (A.D. 452).

10. Cybele was the goddess of the earth. She is usually represented as wearing a turreted crown (tiara).

14. During her early history, and until the 16th Century, Venice was one of the most important cities in Europe. Situated most advantageously, she became the centre of traffic and commerce between Europe and the East. When the passage to India round the Cape of Good Hope was discovered, trade routes were changed and Venice lost much of her commercial splendour. Donn Byrne's novel, *Messer Marco Polo*, contains a charming picture of Venice in her glory.

Page 70. — 17. purple. The colour of royalty.

19. **Tasso.** Torquato Tasso (1544-1595)—author of *La Gerusalemme Liberata*. The poet's patron was Alfonso II, Duke of Ferrara. History has it, but upon slight evidence, that Tasso fell in love with Alfonso's sister, Leonora. On the pretext that he was insane, Alfonso had the poet confined in a mad house for seven years.

In the 18th Century Addison describes what was apparently a common practice of "singing stanzas out of Tasso. They are set to a pretty, solemn tune and when one begins in any part of the poet, it is odds but he will be answered by somebody else who overhears him."

20. **gondolier.** Not a little of the subtle charm of Venice is due to the quaint means of transport employed in traversing the City's "watery streets and lanes". Gondolas took the place, in Byron's day, of carriages, and today serve as taxi and motor cars.

24. Nature's beauty outlasts the works of man's hand. Compare Page 80, stanza CLXXXII.

27. **masque.** Literally, a play in which there is much fanciful display of costume and setting. Here, simply a scene of pleasure and festivity.

29. **story.** History.

33. **Rialto.** A famous bridge spanning the Grand Canal. The name is also used to indicate the district adjoining this bridge. It was here that much of the banking and commerce of the city was carried on. Shylock refers to it in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*.

33-34. Venice was the setting for Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* and for Otway's *Venice Preserved*. The **Moor** is, of course, Othello; **Pierre** is the hero of Otway's play.

36. The physical and political glory of Venice may be swept away. For the lover of art and literature, she will remain as she was at the height of her splendour.

37. Annually, on Ascension Day, the Doge of Venice used to indicate the supremacy of Venice on the seas by the ceremony of wedding the Adriatic. Rowed out from the city in the state barge, the **Bucentaur**, he threw a large ring into the waters. When Byron visited the city it was subject to the Austrians,—hence the custom referred to had fallen into disuse.

40. **her widowhood.** Widowhood of the Adriatic Sea.

41. The winged lion of St. Mark surmounts one of two columns which stand keeping guard over the Piazza di San Marco.

43. In 1177, on the Piazza di San Marco, at the foot of the lion-crowned column, the **Emperor**, Frederic Barbarossa, sued for terms of peace with Pope Alexander III. Frederic is referred to in line 46 as **The Suabian**.

Page 71. — 46. The **Austrians** held sway in Venice almost continuously from 1797 to 1866. In the lines which follow Byron is quite possibly thinking of Napoleon, who encouraged the subjugation of the Venetian State.

52. **lauwine.** Avalanche.

53. **Dandolo.** Henry Dandolo, one of the most famous doges of Venice, who, though 80 years of age and blind, led the Venetian attack upon Constantinople (then Byzantium) and captured the city, during the Fourth Crusade in 1204. He brought to Venice the "glorious team of bronze horses" which had been removed from one of the triumphal arches in Rome and carried to Constantinople by Constantine.

57-58. **Doria's menace.** The Venetians were defeated by the Paduans and Genoese in 1379. They offered to submit to any terms, providing their independence was respected. Peter Doria, the Genoese commander, sent back the following answer: "Ye shall have no peace from the Signor of Padua, nor from the Commune of Genova, until we have first put a rein upon those unbridled horses of yours, which are upon the porch of your evangelist, St. Mark".

64. Childe Harold has now left Venice and is making his way along the Brenta River. **Blue Friuli's Mountains** are the Julian Alps. Of the description given in the three following stanzas, Byron himself says: "The above description may seem fantastical or exaggerated to those who have never seen an Oriental or an Italian sky, yet it is but a literal and hardly sufficient delineation of an August evening (the eighteenth) as contemplated in one of many rides along the Brenta, near La Mira".

69. **Iris.** Rainbow.

71. **Dian's crest.** The Moon. Diana was the goddess of the moon.

Page 72. — 76. **Rhætian hill.** Perhaps higher and more remote peaks of the Julian Alps already referred to above. This district is known as the Tyrol.

91. Childe Harold has passed through Arqua and Ferrara and has paused to honour the great dead whose names and memories are intertwined with these localities. Now he turns to bewail the fatal gift of beauty which has lured to Italy many a conquering tyrant. The two stanzas which follow he says "are, with the exception of a line or two, a translation of the famous sonnet of Filicaja" (a Florentine poet of the 17th Century).

Page 73. — 105. Devastating hosts from many nations would no longer quaff blood and water from the River Po.

109. In stanza XLVII Byron states that the sorrow and wrongs of Italy should ring through every land and win sympathy for her.

117. **the barbarian tide.** The host of invaders. "Barbarian" is used in the sense in which the Romans employed it,—to indicate people who were outside the City of Rome and did not enjoy the privileges of Roman citizenship.

118. Childe Harold now passes down the River Arno to the City of Florence, the most important city in Tuscany.

119. **Etrurian Athens.** Florence. Etruria was the ancient name for Tuscany. Florence is referred to as Athens by the poet who remembers the great importance of the city in art and literature during the Renaissance. Under its protection colleges and treasure houses of art sprang up and it was for years looked upon as one of the centres of culture and learning.

123. **redundant horn.** Byron here refers to the horn of plenty—the Cornucopia.

126. **buried Learning rose.** Byron refers to the Renaissance, or Revival of Learning, which came after the period of the so-called Dark Ages.

Page 74. — 127. In a letter written in the year 1817, Byron said: "The church of Santa Croce contains much illustrious nothing. The tombs of Machiavelli, Michael Angelo, Galileo, and Alfieri make it the Westminster Abbey of Italy. I did not admire any of these tombs beyond their contents."

133. **Angelo.** Michael Angelo (1475-1564) one of the world's greatest geniuses. He was famous as a sculptor, painter, architect

and poet. His versatility is characteristic of the period of the Renaissance. Alfieri (1749-1803)—an Italian dramatist. He was a great advocate of Italian liberty.

134. Galileo (1564-1642). A great astronomer who is credited with the invention of the telescope. As a result of his observations of the stars, he formulated the theory that the earth moves around the sun. This was in direct opposition to the teaching accepted and authorized by the Church. Consequently, Galileo was brought to trial and imprisoned.

135. Machiavelli (1469-1527). A great Florentine diplomatist and writer on politics and government. His name has become a by-word for anything in state craft or politics which displays unusual shrewdness.

141-144. Though Italy is in ruins, her past glory departed, there is still evidence of divinely inspired genius. The greatness of the sculptor Canova (1757-1822) adds lustre to his country's name in these years of decadence.

146. Dante (1265-1321). The most famous of Italian poets, recognized as one of the world's greatest writers. He was the author of the *Divina Comedia*, in which he describes his journey through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. He was violently opposed by certain factions in his native city of Florence, was banished and died in exile at Ravenna.

Petrarch (1304-1374). One of the first great lyric poets of modern times. His name will always be associated with the Sonnet, which poetical form he employed in singing the sorrows of his unrequited love for Laura. Petrarch did not actually live in Florence. He was born at Arezzo, his father having been exiled from Florence at the same time as Dante.

147. Boccaccio (1313-1375). The first great master of prose style in modern times. He is justly famous as the author of the *Decameron*, a collection of 100 marvellous tales of love, supposedly recounted by a group of ladies and gentlemen to ward off the tedium of ten days spent at a country house. Compare Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

155. Scipio Africanus, the Elder, was a great Roman leader, the conqueror of Carthage. In spite of this, he was banished from Rome and, like Dante, spent his last years in exile. He is said to have been buried at Liternum on the coast of Campania.

Page 75. — 156. Florence was famous for the plots and factions which divided her citizens.

160. Petrarch was crowned with laurel at Rome on Easter Sunday, 1341, while Florence refused to recognize his greatness.

163. "Boccaccio was buried in the church of St. Michael and St. James at Certaldo, a small town in the Valdelsa, which was by some supposed the place of his birth. There he passed the latter part of his life . . . and there might his ashes have been secure, if not of honour, at least of repose. But the hyæna bigot's of Certaldo tore up the tombstone of Boccaccio and ejected it from the holy precincts of St. Michael and St. James."—(Byron's Note).

172. wants. lacks.

174. Byron here refers to "the funeral of Junia, wife of Cassius and sister of Brutus, A.D. 22, during the reign of Tiberius, on which occasion the busts of these two distinguished men were not allowed to be carried in the procession on account of their having taken part in the murder of Caesar" (Tozer's Note). Tacitus, the Roman historian, says of the incident that the fame of Brutus and Cassius shone forth all the more brightly, owing to the fact that their busts were not included in the pageant.

176. Happier Ravenna! See note on line 146.

178. Petrarch as an exile found hospitality in Arquà: it was there he died and was buried.

Childe Harold now continues his journey and arrives at Rome, the Eternal City. Here his tendency to pity himself and chide Fate for his unhappy lot is hushed as he contemplates the havoc which Time and the hand of man have wrought upon the patient City.

Page 76. — 190. Niobe, in Greek mythology, boasted of her large family and incurred the wrath of Latona, mother of Apollo and Diana. In retaliation the latter killed all Niobe's children with their arrows.

194. This tomb was discovered on the Appian Way in 1780. It was not long until it had been rifled of all relics of the famous noble family of Rome.

Walking about Rome, Childe Harold comes upon the Coliseum which was the largest amphitheatre in Rome and is still one of the City's most imposing ruins. It was built by Titus, A.D. 80 and

received its name from a colossal statue of Nero which formerly stood in it. The amphitheatre was the site of great celebrations and is particularly remembered for the gladiatorial contests which took place there. It was capable of seating 87,000 spectators.

Page 77. — 212-213. There is a subtle charm about ruins, where Time has left his impression but has not wholly destroyed the structure.

217. The two stanzas which follow are entirely characteristic of Byron. In them he cries out against Fate, which, he feels, has been unkind. He refers, of course, to the extreme disfavour which drove him from England. He turns from the present with its erroneous judgment and appeals to the Future to avenge the wrongs which he has suffered. Many of the passages of "Childe Harold" which have been omitted contain similar melancholy reflections.

222. sophists. False teachers.

226. this wreck. The Coliseum.

234. This iron. This bitter sorrow and disappointment.

they. Byron's enemies; those who had attacked his character and his work.

235. here. The Coliseum.

The stanza contains an excellent description of the behaviour of a large crowd.

Page 78. — 239-240. The death or life of a gladiator who had been put down by his opponent depended upon the whim of the crowd of Roman spectators.

245. From the stones of the ruined Coliseum many large buildings in Rome have been constructed.

250. fabric. Building.

253. It is interesting to compare Byron's description of the ruined Coliseum seen by moonlight with Scott's description of Melrose Abbey viewed under similar circumstances. (*Lay of the Last Minstrel*—

"If thou wilt view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight")

257. the garland-forest. Bushes which now grow atop the ruined walls.

262. Leaving Rome, Childe Harold has travelled South through the Alban Hills, and comes out now above the Sea to rejoice in its majestic beauty. The stanzas that follow are characteristic of the attitude taken by the Romantic poets towards Nature. They loved it because in its solitudes, in its loveliness, its wildness, they found a refuge to which they could escape from the stifling cares and conventions of organized society.

Page 79. — 271. The poet Swinburne said of this address to the Ocean: "Allowing for one or two slips and blots, we must after all replace it among the choice and high possessions of poetry. After the first there is hardly a weak line; many have a wonderful vigour and melody; and the deep and glad disdain of the sea for men and the works of men passes into the verse in music and fills it with a weighty and sonorous harmony, grave and sweet as the measured voice of heavy remote waves."

293. clay creator. Man.

298. The last two stanzas, which are the concluding lines of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, move with a measured dignity which reminds the reader of the *Psalms*.

KEATS

JOHN KEATS was born in London on October 29, 1795. His father was an employee in a livery-stable in Moorfields, having married the proprietor's daughter. The young boy was sent to a private school at Enfield, the headmaster of which was Mr. Clarke. The latter's son, Charles Cowden Clarke, remained a loyal and valuable friend of the poet throughout his life. Keats seems to have been a normal school-boy with a love for fighting and not a little inclination to play the bully. When books were offered him by the Clarkes he read them eagerly. His schooling came to an end when his mother died in 1810 (his father had predeceased her by 6 years) and the boy was apprenticed to a surgeon in Edmonton. Here he spent five years and showed a good deal of aptitude for the work. He continued to see much of the Clarkes, at whose home he met such literary men as Leigh Hunt, Shelley, Godwin and Hazlitt. Following his apprenticeship he worked in the London hospitals as surgeon's helper, but poetry was absorbing daily more of his attention. Finally in 1817, on the advice of his friends, Keats gave up surgery and began to devote all his energies to writing. Later, in the same year, he published his first volume of poems. It was unsuccessful, save for the encouragement it brought from Keats' friends. In consequence of this he published, the next year, *Endymion*. This was the signal for an unwarrantably savage attack on the young poet by the *Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine*. At this time Keats' life was saddened by the hopeless illness of his brother Tom, and by the unmistakable tokens of the increasing hold of the dread disease (consumption) upon himself. Additional bitterness was added to the poet's cup by the fact that his sickness made his marriage with Fanny Brawne, to whom he was passionately devoted, impossible. Despite all this, 1819-20 was his great year. During it practically all the poems upon which his most secure fame rests were written. Seldom has there been a more inspiring example of the ability of the indomitable spirit of a man to rise above the untoward facts of life. In September, 1820, the poet left England to seek health and strength in Italy. But it was too late. He was accompanied by his friend, Severn, the artist. They settled in Rome where, despite the devoted care of his friend, John Keats died on February 23, 1821. On his tombstone in the little Protestant Cemetery there is inscribed the epitaph he had requested:

"Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

Keats was in many respects the greatest of the group of romantic poets. Not one of them devoted himself with more courage and constancy to the ideal which he set before him. Unlike Wordsworth, he was little affected by the political movements of his day; unlike Shelley and Byron, he found no satisfaction in revolt against Society. He set himself to reveal to the world in practice as well as by precept

that Truth and Beauty are inseparably joined, and from their union issues a Joy which is man's best refuge from the miseries of human existence, a Joy which Time cannot conquer.

To think of Keats as a sentimental, mawkish individual, living in a constant twilight of melancholy, and hastened on his way to the grave by the censure of his critics, is to do violence to his courageous spirit. This man had, as Matthew Arnold said, "flint and iron in him." Hear Keats' own brave words — "Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic of his own works. My own criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* could possibly inflict; and also, when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary reception and ratification of what is fine." Or again — "I have not the slightest feel of humility towards the public or to anything in existence but the Eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty, and the Memory of Great Men". Keats said on one occasion, "I think I shall be among the English poets after my death". Speaking of the clear-sighted faith of this prophecy, Arnold has said — "He is; he is with Shakespeare".

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

As the title implies, this sonnet was inspired by Keats' first acquaintance with Homer, for which he was indebted to Chapman's translation. George Chapman was a late Elizabethan poet and dramatist. His translation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer is "the only good one in English verse", according to Professor Saintsbury. It was to read this work in the beautiful old Folio edition of 1616 that Keats and his school friend, Charles Cowden Clarke, sat up until daybreak. On the same morning, Clarke tells us, he received a copy of this sonnet. It was published in Keats' first volume of poems in 1817.

The sonnet presents a remarkable illustration of well-sustained imagery. The metaphor with which the poem opens, likening literature to a vast realm, in which individual poets hold various kingdoms, is fully developed, yet without being strained or overdone.

Page 81. — 1. realms of gold. "The literature of beauty and imagination." (Alexander).

4. Apollo. The God of Poetry.

11 Keats' error in naming Cortez instead of Balboa as the first to see the Pacific thus has often been commented upon. The error does not in the least mar the poetic beauty of the sonnet.

14. Darien. The Isthmus of Panama.

Amy Lowell, in her voluminous work on Keats, says: "The simile in the sestet is a reminiscence of a passage in Robertson's *History of America*, which, Clarke tells us, was in the school library at Enfield. . . . The passage in Robertson which gave him his picture is this:

'At length the Indians assured them, that from the top of the next mountain they should discover the ocean which was the object of their wishes. When, with infinite toil, they had climbed up the greater part of that steep ascent, Balboa commanded his men to halt, that he might be the first who should enjoy a spectacle which he had so long desired. As soon as he beheld the South Sea stretching in endless prospect below him, he fell on his knees, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, returned thanks to God, who had conducted him to a discovery so beneficial to his country and so honourable to himself. His followers, observing his transport of joy, rushed forward to join in his wonder, exultation, and gratitude'."

Keats made two interesting alterations in the text of earlier drafts. Originally, line 7 stood:

"Yet never could I tell what men could mean".

This Keats changed because, he told Cowden Clarke, it seemed to him "bald and too simply wondering".

In the original manuscript we find in line 11 "wond'ring eyes" which is vague and abstract, when compared with the concrete, explicit eagle eyes which later replaced it.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

"This poem was included in the *Journal Letter to George Keats* dated February-May, 1819, and headed Wednesday Evening, 28th April. The manner in which it is written and corrected points to its being a first draft, composed at that time. It was first published in the *Indicator* of May, 1820, with a short prefatory essay by Leigh Hunt, stating that it was suggested by the title of a poem, *La Belle Dame Sans Mercy*, once supposed to be a translation by Chaucer of a dialogue by Alain Chartier, the court poet to Charles II of France." (E. de Sélincourt.)

We have other evidences of Keats' interest in the title. It was the name given to Porphyro's song to Madeline in the *Eve of St.*

Agnes, which Keats describes as "an ancient ditty, long since mute, in Provence called, *La belle dame sans mercy*".

Sir Sidney Colvin says of Keats' poem: "Keats' ballad can hardly be said to tell a story, but rather sets before us, with imagery drawn from the mediaeval world of enchantment and knight-errantry, a type of the wasting power of love when either adverse fate or deluded choice makes love not a blessing but a bane".

The early manuscript of the poem is interesting as showing the poet at work. Many words are scored out and alterations made, most of them entirely advantageous. Some of these will be noted below.

4. Note the curiously sad cadence in this short fourth line recurring in each stanza.

9. a lily. Keats originally wrote "death's lily" as in line 11 "death's fading rose". Do you agree with the alteration here?

13. meads. Originally "wilds". Why this change?

18. zone. Girdle. Compare Shelley's *The Cloud*—
"I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone".

fragrant. Because made of flowers.

26. manna dew. Originally "honey dew".

30. and sigh'd full sore. Originally "and there she sigh'd".

45. sojourn. Originally "wither".

The first version of the Ballad as given in the *Journal Letter* was further altered before publication in the *Indicator*. Professor de Sélincourt, in his useful and beautiful edition of Keats' Poems (*Methuen*, 1926), gives the two versions on opposite pages. Students will find it interesting and profitable to compare these. Most critics will agree that the *Journal* version is superior, the alterations having been made, apparently, by the poet "in a moment of less intense imaginative realisation of his theme". Stanza 8 will serve as a good example. The *Indicator* version reads—

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gazed and sighed deep,
And there I shut her wild, sad eyes—
So kiss'd to sleep".

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

The Ode was written in May, 1819, and was first published in 1820 in the *Annals of the Fine Arts*. Professor de Sélincourt, following Sir Sidney Colvin, points out that the inspiration to write it came from "no single extant work of antiquity" but from "a combination of sculptures actually seen at the British Museum with others known to him only from engravings. . . . It is difficult, indeed, to believe that the lines on the Sacrifice and the picture of the 'heifer lowing at the skies' were not suggested solely by the Elgin marbles." These beautiful fragments of Greek sculpture, Keats had for some years been studying with great delight and admiration. Amy Lowell is much more dogmatic than the two authorities referred to above: "The first thing to be noted about the *Grecian Urn*," she says, "is that the inspiration for it came from the Elgin marbles, from that part of the frieze of the Parthenon which shows the cattle being brought to the sacrifice. No urn had anything to do with it." Later, in the same discussion, Amy Lowell says of the poem itself: "The poem is well-nigh flawless from beginning to end. It is a picture, an experience, and a creed, all in one. . . . I think that when Keats wrote the *Grecian Urn* he was at the very zenith of his development, more entirely simple, whole and undivided, more completely master of his qualities, all of them, than ever before or ever again."

The central idea of the Ode is not new, but has been given most beautiful and memorable expression by Keats—the thought of the permanence of beauty in art as opposed to its insecure and fleeting existence in the real world about him. The glorious tresses which hang upon the trees in Summer must be shed, the melody of a flute heard by the bodily sense may please the hearer for a moment but it must fall silent, the ecstasy of human love wakes to a dawn of disillusionment and cold despair, but all these in a work of art are given a permanence which defies the tyrannical hand of Time. Wordsworth has given beautiful expression to a similar thought:

"Soul-soothing art, whom Morning, Noontide, Even,
Do serve with all their changeful pageantry:
Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest eternity."

(*Upon the Sight of a Beautiful Picture*)

Page 83. — 1-2. The urn has escaped mutilation and damage, as if it had been taken under the protection of Time as an adopted child.

7. Tempe. A beautiful valley in Thessaly.

Arcady. The district of Arcadia inhabited by a simple, pastoral population, and famous for its quiet and peaceful beauty.

Page 84. — 11. ff. Many things are more beautiful as called up by the imagination than the corresponding realities.

21-30. The moment of ecstatic joy has been caught by the Greek sculptor and imprisoned forever in a work of art.

26. enjoy'd. Fully realized.

21. ff. The imagery of this stanza is exquisitely appropriate to the subject. There is here a truly Greek spirit. The marvel is that Keats caught this so completely, since he knew classic literature only through translation.

41. brede. An archaic word meaning embroidery, hence any raised ornamentation and here the sculpture in relief on the urn or frieze.

Attic. Originating in the Province of Attica, hence Athenian or, in general, Grecian.

Page 85. — 46-50. Compare this beautiful expression of Keats' faith in the power of Beauty with the opening lines of his *Endymion*.

49-50. Matthew Arnold, commenting upon these two lines, said: "No, it is not all; but it is true, and we have need to know it. And with beauty goes not only truth, joy goes with her also; and this, too, Keats saw and said, as in the famous first line of *Endymion* it stands written

'A thing of beauty is a joy forever.'

It is no small thing to have so loved the principle of beauty as to perceive the necessary relation of beauty to truth, and of both with joy".

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

During the Spring of 1819, Keats was living at Wentworth Place, Hampstead, with his friend, Charles Brown, to whom we are indebted for an account of the circumstances surrounding the composition of this great ode. The account may be inaccurate in a few details, but is, in the main, undoubtedly true.

"In the Spring of 1819, a nightingale had built her nest near my house. Keats felt a tranquil and continual joy in her song: and one

morning he took his chair from the breakfast table to the grass-plot under a plum-tree, where he sat for two or three hours. When he came into the house, I perceived he had some scraps of paper in his hand, and these he was quietly thrusting behind the books. On inquiry, I found those scraps, four or five in number, contained his poetic feeling on the song of our nightingale. . . . And this was his *Ode To A Nightingale*, a poem which has been the delight of every one."

In the Introduction to Professor de Sélincourt's Edition of the Poems, we find the following lucid and understanding comment upon the ode.

"The *Ode to a Nightingale*, the first of them (Keats' Odes) to be given to the world, is the most deeply charged with human feeling. Bowed down beneath a crushing, personal bereavement, the poet is tortured by the mystery of human suffering and decay in a world,

'Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies',
and in the song of the bird, he detects, for the time at least, a symbol of the beauty for which there is no death nor change; which has power by reason of its subtle charm to draw the worlds of Nature and Romance closer to that stern reality in which, worshipper of beauty though he be, he has yet perforce to bear his part."

1. **drowsy numbness pains.** Stood in the original draft, "painful numbness pains".

2. **hemlock.** A plant with poisonous properties, common in Asia and parts of Europe. An extract made from the plant, if given at full strength, acted as an opiate and gradually produced death. It is supposed that this was the drug given to Socrates.

3. **dull opiate.** Note the appropriateness of the epithet "dull". Keats had great skill in selecting just the right descriptive word, packed with meaning and suggesting to the reader's imagination appropriate associations. Compare "sunburnt mirth", "embalmed darkness", "verdurous glooms", "murmurous haunt of flies", etc.

It was at least partly of this gift that Matthew Arnold was thinking when he wrote: "No one else in English poetry, save Shakespeare, has in expression quite the fascinating felicity of Keats, his perfection of loveliness".

4. **Lethe.** One of the rivers in Hades famous in Greek mythology. Its waters had power to cause forgetfulness of all the past.

7. **Dryad.** A tree nymph, particularly fond of inhabiting oaks.

13. **Flora.** Goddess of flowers and all the fresh beauty of Spring.

14. Few corners of Europe are more crowded with associations of romance for the lover of literature and music than Provence, the home in the Middle Ages of the troubadours.

14-15. There is a pathos in the fervour with which Keats longed for the warmth and beauty of the South. The cold dampness of the English climate aggravated his disease.

16. **Hippocrene.** A fountain on Mount Helicon, sacred to the Muses. The fountain gushed forth from the hoof print of Pegasus, the winged horse of the Muses, when he came to earth upon the sacred mountain. The waters of the fountain had the power to inspire those who drank them. From Greek **Hippokrene**, the horse fountain—**hippos**, a horse + **krene**, a fountain.

Page 86. — 31-40. The poet dismisses the idea of reaching the nightingale through the agency of wine and intoxication. He resolves to leave the world of actuality with its misery and sorrow by the power of the imagination and poetic inspiration. In a moment the feat is accomplished and the poet is with the bird in the “embalméd darkness” of its enchanted thicket.

32. **Bacchus.** God of wine. His chariot was represented as being drawn by leopards.

40. **verdurous.** Leafy and green.

42. **incense.** Perfume of flowers. An exquisite image.

43. **embalméd.** Perfumed.

51. **Darkling.** An archaic expression—“in the dark”. The expression seems usually to imply that darkness is gradually deepening.

51-56. We frequently find the Romantic poets dallying, half enviously, with the idea of Death. (Compare Shelley: *Lines Written in Dejection*, page 92.) One is scarcely surprised at this in the case of Keats, who had suffered a terrible bereavement in the death of his brother and knew that he was himself marked for early death.

Page 87. — 60. **requiem.** A hymn for the dead.

61-70. This is one of the loveliest stanzas in English poetry, packed as it is with rich associations from literature and, by the magic of the last three lines, flinging wide the casements of the mind and so releasing the reader to wander free over the “perilous seas” of old, romantic story.

69. *magic*. Stood in the original draft "the wide".

70. *perilous*. Originally "Keelless". What idea came into Keats' mind with that strange word?

faery land. Amy Lowell has drawn attention to the significance of the spelling, "faery", not "fairy". It is not the land of elves into which the mind is sent voyaging by the nightingale's song, but the land of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the land of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, in a word, the land of old romance.

TO AUTUMN

On September 22, 1819, Keats wrote from Winchester to his friend, Woodhouse—"How beautiful the season is now—How fine the air—the temperate sharpness about it. Really without joking chaste weather—Dian skies—I never liked stubble-fields so much as now—aye better than the chilly green of Spring. Somehow, a stubble-field looks warm—in the same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk, that I composed upon it."

The composition referred to is most certainly our *Ode to Autumn*, and the Sunday, September 19.

This, the last of Keats' great Odes, is worthy to be ranked with the *Ode To A Nightingale* and *Ode On A Grecian Urn*. It differs in certain respects from both. It is a wholly objective composition and suggests nothing beyond itself. The poet is not here; he has been the sensitive medium through which are recorded the atmosphere, the sights and sounds of Autumn as they might be felt by any unusually responsive nature. The poem is a succession of pictures of a most appealing beauty. Sir Sidney Colvin has written concerning it: "In the first stanza the bounty, in the last the pensiveness of the time, are expressed in words so transparent and direct that we almost forget they are words at all, and nature herself and the season seem speaking to us".

It is most interesting to note to what an extent Keats has personified Nature in this Ode. In this respect the poem resembles the work of Shelley.

Page 88. — 11. *clammy cells*. An instance of Keats' skill in choosing words. Compare *fume of poppies* in line 17 below and see the note on *Ode to a Nightingale*, line 3.

12. Notice in this stanza with what skill and economy of artistic material Keats has suggested the three different pictures of Autumn. In doing so he has employed only a few suggestive details.

17. The poppy is always associated with sleep, largely because of the fact that opium is made from the juice of some varieties of the plant.

26. See the letter to Reynolds quoted above.

28. *sallows*. Willows, sometimes called "sallies".

30. *ourn*. Region.

STANZAS

This charming little song was written, we are told by Keats' friend, Woodhouse, in December, 1817, when the poet was studying at Burford Bridge. The poem does not show Keats at his best. The choice of words is not as skilful as usual, and the expression, particularly in the third stanza, is not very clear. The composition is chiefly interesting for its form. Notice particularly the rhyming of the last lines of all three stanzas.

Page 89. — 1. In the version left us by Woodhouse the "a" is omitted.

8. *prime*. Spring.

12. *Apollo*. The Sun.

21. This line in the Woodhouse version reads—
"The feel of *not* to feel it."

Sir Sidney Colvin and Amy Lowell accept that reading as being very much more expressive. Professor de Sélincourt, on the other hand, supports the reading printed in this edition.

" BRIGHT STAR "

Keats set out for Italy in September, 1820. On the journey, he and his artist friend, Severn, were becalmed in the English Channel and landed near Lulworth Cove on the Dorsetshire Coast. Severn has left us this interesting account of the poet at this time. "For a moment he became like his former self. He was in a part that he already knew and showed me the splendid caverns and grottoes with a poet's pride, as though they had been his by birthright. When we returned to the ship he wrote for me on a blank leaf in a Folio volume of Shakespeare, which he gave me in memory of our voyage,

the following magnificent sonnet." Following this, Keats' health failed so rapidly that he was unable to do any work requiring concentration. This sonnet was, therefore, considered to be Keats' last composition until Sir Sidney Colvin's recent discovery of an earlier draft of it dated 1819. It is undoubtedly true, however, that the revision of the sonnet by Keats, as he wrote it into the copy of Shakespeare for Severn, was his last work as a poet.

Page 90. — 4. patient. In the earlier draft "devout".

5. moving. In the earlier draft "morning".

10. This line in the earlier draft reads—

"Cheek-pillow'd on my love's ripening breast".

13-14. The last two lines were originally:

"To hear, to feel her tender-taken breath
Half-passionless, and so swoon on to death".

Palgrave included this sonnet in his *Golden Treasury*. His note, though erroneously describing the poem as Keats' "last", contains such an interesting judgment of the poet that we cannot refrain from quoting it here:

"This beautiful sonnet was the last word of a youth, in whom, if the fulfilment may ever safely be prophesied from the promise, England lost one of the most rarely gifted in the long roll of her poets. Shakespeare and Milton, had their lives been closed at twenty-five, would (so far as we know) have left poems of less excellence and hope than the youth who, from the petty school and the London surgery, passed at once to a place with them of 'high collateral glory'."

SHELLEY

"He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake reflected sun illumine
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see what things they be,
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of Immortality."

—SHELLEY, *Prometheus Unbound*.

SHELLEY was born in Field Place, near Horsham, Sussex, in 1792. He was descended on both his mother's and father's side from old, noble families. From his earliest childhood the future poet lived not in a world of reality, but in a realm of fancy. He was sent to a public school as a young boy, and there had the misfortune to come under the care of a bullying and brutal master, who left an indelible mark upon the impressionable child's nature. At 12 years of age, he entered Eton. There he suffered agony owing to the tormenting and teasing of the older, bigger and stronger boys. It is characteristic of Shelley's spirit throughout his life that in the face of such circumstances he did not submit, but fought hopelessly and miserably against the tyranny which he felt crushing him. Leaving Eton, he went up to Oxford. Here he seems to have done very little in the way of systematic study. He was very much influenced by a group of radical thinkers at the University. As a result he published a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*. The views expressed brought him into sharp conflict with the University authorities and, as might be expected, the youthful author was promptly expelled. Thus, at the age of nineteen, Shelley was set adrift in a world which he already felt to be cruel and inhospitable. In this year he made an unfortunate marriage with Harriet Westbrook, a school girl of sixteen. The youthful couple lived a nomadic existence until 1813, when they separated. The story of poor Harriet is one of the sad pages of Shelley's history. She committed suicide in 1816. Shelley then married Mary Godwin, with whom he had already formed a very deep attachment and who was to be a most helpful companion to the poet. Already he had published several poems, among them *Queen Mab*, in which he expressed ideas entirely at variance with the accepted standards of the British public. After his marriage, Shelley applied to the court for authority of guardianship over his children by his marriage with Harriet. This the court denied him, stating that owing to his views and conduct he was not a fit person to be charged with the education and upbringing of children. Feeling himself thus completely outlawed, Shelley left England, in 1818, never to return. His health at this time was extremely delicate and he and Mary went directly to Italy where

they lived in various cities, finally establishing themselves in a home at Pisa. Here Shelley found the nearest approach to peace that he knew in his tormented restless life. Here he wrote some of his finest lyric poetry. During his sojourn in Italy, he was interested in the struggle of the Italians and the Greeks in the cause of political liberty. He met and admired many of the leaders in these movements. Of Byron, who was himself living in exile, Shelley saw a good deal, and their friendship was of mutual advantage. In 1822, when he was scarcely thirty years of age, the poet was drowned while sailing in a small craft off the coast of Leghorn. The body, washed ashore, was, in conformity with Customs regulations, cremated on the beach in the presence of Lord Byron and a few English friends. Shelley's ashes were gathered and given burial beside the tomb of Keats in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome.

Shelley, ever an impetuous, rebellious spirit, was the greatest theorist and visionary among the group of Romantic poets. His whole tortured life was spent in a vain conflict with Society and a hopeless quest for a better order of things. He was utterly impractical, always an enthusiast, always a fantastic dreamer. But what interests us most is his great lyric gift. Seldom, if ever, has there appeared in our Literature a poetic spirit so impetuous, so spontaneous, so swift and sure in flight. Of him Edmund Gosse has said:

"He is probably the English writer who has achieved the highest successes in pure lyric, whether of an elaborate and anthiphonal order, or of that which springs in a stream of soaring music straight from the heart".

OZYMANDIAS

In the Dedication of the *Revolt of Islam*, one of Shelley's earliest poetic works, he wrote:

"I will be wise,
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
Such power; for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannize
Without reproach or check".

The hatred of tyranny and oppression expressed in these lines was characteristic of Shelley throughout his life. We are not surprised, therefore, that he should find the empty and impotent boast of Ozymandias a congenial theme. He contemplates with scornful satisfaction, the nothingness to which the pretentious vanity of the monarch has been reduced, in such sharp contrast with the permanence of the quiet, abiding forces of Nature.

Shelley is indebted for the passage which gave him his inspiration to the old Greek historian, Diodorus (the "traveller" of our poem),

who gives an account of the statue of Ozymandias which, he says, was reputed to be the largest in Egypt.

The sonnet is not strictly regular in form. The rhyming of some of the lines is faulty. The division of the sonnet into octave and sestet is skilfully done, corresponding very well with the division of the thought. In the concluding lines the contrast between the forces of Nature and the fate of Ozymandias is dramatically expressed.

Ozymandias was composed in 1817 and first published in January, 1818.

Page 91. — 2. trunkless. Without a body.

6. those passions. The passions of the tyrant—pride and vanity—which have prompted the “sneer” and the “wrinkled lip” which the sculptor has depicted upon the face of the statue.

8. The hand that mocked them. The sculptor's.
the heart that fed. Ozymandias'.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION NEAR NAPLES

Shelley was ever an impulsive creature—buoyed up one moment by enthusiasm, the next plunged into the very abyss of despair and melancholy. These beautiful stanzas, which mirror a mood of deep dejection, were written during 1818 while Shelley was living in Italy, near Naples. Mrs. Shelley has left a striking account of the poet at that time:

“Our winter was spent at Naples. . . . At this time Shelley suffered greatly in health. He put himself under the care of a medical man, who promised great things, and made him endure severe bodily pain, without any good results. Constant and poignant suffering exhausted him; and though he preserved the appearance of cheerfulness and often greatly enjoyed our wanderings in the environs of Naples, and our excursions on its sunny seas, yet many hours were passed when his thoughts, shadowed by illness, became gloomy,—and then he escaped to solitude, and in verses, which he hid from fear of wounding me, poured forth morbid, but too natural bursts of discontent and sadness”.

Page 92. — 22. The sage. It is unlikely that Shelley was referring to any particular philosopher or teacher. The term is used in a general sense.

35-36. Shelley was drowned in July, 1822. These lines acquire an additional pathos for the reader from their prophetic character.

37. ff. Like many of the other Romantic poets, notably Byron, Shelley was an intensely subjective artist and very frequently indulged in self-pity.

TO A SKYLARK

Written and first published in 1820. The poet and Mrs. Shelley were at the time living in Italy. They had spent the latter part of 1819 in Florence and Pisa. In the following Spring, they went to live near Leghorn in the house of some friends who were absent in England on business. Mrs. Shelley writes: "It was on a beautiful summer evening, while wandering among the lanes, whose myrtle hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that we heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems".

The skylark, like the nightingale, has been frequently celebrated in English poetry. The peculiar flight of the bird, its habit of singing from a point so high in the heavens as to make it finally invisible, the great beauty of its delicate song, its breathlessness, its tumultuous profusion—all these characteristics stimulate the poetic imagination. To Shelley, listening on the plain below, the skylark, and its song seem to embody all he had ever aspired to be—free, happy, lost in the joy of its own spirit, possessed of the secrets both of life and death, and listened to by a grateful world.

The swift, pulsating movement of this lyric is very well suited to the subject,—the four short lines, followed by the long fifth, suggest the flight of the bird. The skylark does not, of course, fly straight up, but ascends in a spiral by means of a series of swift darts forward. After several of these, the bird seems to float for a moment before climbing still higher into the "blue deep".

Page 93. — 15. unbodied joy. A spirit freed from the confining fetters of the body.

race. Existence.

11. ff. The next three stanzas have given rise to much discussion. Is Shelley describing a morning or an evening scene? The imagery all seems to suggest evening. Besides this, we have Mrs. Shelley's note (quoted above). The confusion perhaps arose from the fact that the skylark is usually spoken of by poets as singing in the morning. Hence it has come about that many people think the

bird's performance is limited to that time of day. In reality it is an observed fact that the skylark sings as frequently at sunset as in the morning—at least this is true of the skylarks which sing in the vicinity of Victoria, B.C. This may, of course, be an acquired habit on the part of these immigrants, and one which would not be tolerated in Old World circles.

20. *shrill delight*. The Harvard Manuscript shows that Shelley first wrote "blithe delight". The repetition would have been offensive. In addition, the alteration was an advantageous one because of the aptness of the epithet. The lark's song is actually very delicate and high in pitch.

Page 94. — 22. *that silver sphere*. Many commentators hold that the reference here is to the star mentioned above (line 18). This seems hardly likely. "That" is not necessarily used with demonstrative force. The reference is more forceful and the details of the metaphor more suitable if the passage is taken to be a general statement concerning the moon.

28. *bare*. Clear; bare of clouds.

36. The next five stanzas contain a series of beautiful images, each suggesting with clear artistry the qualities of the bird and its song, which appeal so much to the poet—its spontaneity, its naturalness and ease, its shy seclusion.

39-40. Shelley longed to have the world listen to his song and heed his teaching.

Page 95. — 55. *thieves*. The warm winds which have entered the garden plot to plunder the rose.

56. *vernal*. Spring.

64. *love or wine*. Two very common sources of poetic inspiration.

66. *Chorus Hymenæal*. Bridal chorus. Hymen was the God of Marriage.

71. *fountains*. Sources.

76. *joyance*. Joy; delight.

Page 96. — 105. Here again, as for a moment at lines 59 and 40, there peeps out the eager face of Shelley, the social theorist who had so longed to bring about a regeneration of Society, but to whom the world would not listen.

THE CLOUD

Mrs. Shelley, in the Preface to the first Collected Edition of Shelley's poems (1839) says of *The Cloud* and *To A Skylark* that, in the opinion of many critics, they "bear a purer poetical stamp than any other of his productions. They were written as his mind prompted; listening to the carolling of the bird, aloft in the azure sky of Italy; or marking the cloud as it sped across the heavens, while he (Shelley) floated in his boat on the Thames."

The Cloud is a remarkable example of Shelley's ability to invest the objects of Nature with personality to such a marked degree that he seems actually, at times, to create a new mythology. The poet, Francis Thompson, in his essay on Shelley, has left a most memorable account of this aspect of Shelley's poetic nature: "Coming to Shelley's poetry, we peep over the wild mask of revolutionary metaphysics, and we see the winsome face of the child. Perhaps none of his poems is more purely Shelleian than *The Cloud*, and it is interesting to note how essentially it springs from the faculty of make-believe. The same thing is conspicuous, though less purely conspicuous, throughout his singing; it is the child's faculty of make-believe raised to the nth power. He is still at play, save only that his play is such as manhood stops to watch, and his playthings are those which the gods give their children. The universe is his box of toys. He dabbles his fingers in the day-fall. He is gold-dusty with tumbling amidst the stars. He makes bright mischief with the moon. The meteors nuzzle their noses in his hand. He teases into growling the kennelled thunder and laughs at the shaking of its fiery chain. He dances in and out of the gates of heaven: its floor is littered with his broken fancies. He runs wild over the fields of ether. He chases the rolling world. He gets between the feet of the horses of the sun. He stands in the lap of patient Nature and twines her loosened tresses after a hundred wilful fashions, to see how she will look nicest in his song.

"This it was which, in spite of his essentially modern character as a singer . . . made him, in the truest sense of the word, a mythological poet. This childlike quality assimilated him to the child-like peoples among whom mythologies have their rise. Those Nature myths which, according to many, are the basis of all mythology, are likewise the very basis of Shelley's poetry . . . all the elemental spirits of Nature take from his verse perpetual incarnation and re-

incarnation, pass in a thousand glorious transmigrations through the radiant forms of his imagery."

The metrical movement of the poem is again skilfully adjusted to the subject. Contrasted with the swift, sharp movement of the lines of *To A Skylark*, *The Cloud* moves with a floating majesty which reminds the reader of Shakespeare's "lazy-pacing clouds" or Rupert Brooke's fine description of the motion of clouds at night—"In wise, majestic, melancholy train".

It is interesting to note that the facts which form the basis of this poem are scientifically correct. Shelley has transmuted them into the pure gold of poetry.

Page 97. — 6. buds. In the first editions, "birds". The alteration was made by Mrs. Shelley.

17. Sublime. High.

23. Professor Alexander says of the following passage: "Since the pilot is lightning, Shelley may, perhaps, have thought that the motion of the clouds is influenced by electric currents existing in the earth, and may represent these forces here as genii".

28. Spirit. One of the genii referred to in line 23 above.

31. sanguine. Blood red—the true etymological sense of the word. (Latin *sanguis*, *sanguinis*—blood).

31-34. This remarkable description of the rising sun's light transforming a cloud is an excellent example of Shelley's power in imagery.

Page 98. — 43. With wings folded. Notice the retarding of the line's movement here.

59. zone. Girdle.

65. Sunbeam-proof. Not a sunbeam can penetrate the heavy roof of clouds.

67. triumphal arch. Shelley is thinking of the great Roman triumphs when a victorious leader in war was given, as a special honour, a triumphal entrance into the City, preceding the captives and the spoil he had taken in battle.

Page 99. — 69. chair. Chariot.

71. sphere-fire. Light of the sun. The poet refers to the scientific fact that the rainbow is created by the sun's rays falling through a light mist.

81. **cenotaph.** An empty tomb, erected as a memorial, here the blue dome of the sky. Shelley has endowed the cloud with a spirit of mischief as it chuckles to think how easily it can destroy this cenotaph which has been so laboriously built up.

ARETHUSA

The River Alpheus flows through the Peloponnesus into the Ionian Sea. During part of its course, it disappears underground, finding its way by subterranean channels until it again emerges. It was believed that part of the stream continued underground, flowing through a channel beneath the sea. In support of this it was stated that objects dropped into the Alpheus had been known to reappear in the waters of the fountain Arethusa in Sicily. It is this undoubtedly which suggested to the Greeks the myth of Arethusa and Alpheus. We shall allow Arethusa to tell her own story as you may find it written in Bulfinch's *The Age of Fable*:

"This (Sicily) is not my native country; I came hither from Elis. I was a woodland nymph, and delighted in the chase. They praised my beauty, but I cared nothing for it, and rather boasted of my hunting exploits. One day I was returning from the wood, heated with exercise, when I came to a stream silently flowing, so clear that you might count the pebbles on the bottom . . . While I sported in the water, I heard an indistinct murmur coming up as out of the depths of the stream; and made haste to escape to the nearest bank. The voice said, 'Why do you fly, Arethusa? I am Alpheus, the god of this stream'. I ran, he pursued; he was not more swift than I, but he was stronger, and gained upon me as my strength failed. At last, exhausted, I cried for help to Diana. 'Help me, goddess! help your votary!' The goddess heard, and wrapped me suddenly in a thick cloud. The river god looked now this way and now that, and twice came close to me but could not find me. 'Arethusa! Arethusa!' he cried. Oh, how I trembled—like a lamb that hears the wolf growling outside the fold. A cold sweat came over me. My hair flowed down in streams; where my foot stood there was a pool. In short, in less time than it takes to tell it, I became a fountain. But in this form Alpheus knew me and attempted to mingle his stream with mine. Diana cleft the ground, and I, endeavouring to escape him, plunged into the cavern, and through the bowels of the earth came out here in Sicily."

It is interesting to note the sprightly movement of the verse, suggesting the fleet running of the river nymph.

3. *Acroceraunian mountains*. A range of mountains in Epirus.

Page 100. — 24. *Erymanthus*. A mountain on the borders of Arcadia and Elis.

30. *The bars*. All obstacles in the path of the stream.

36. *Dor'ian deep*. Ionian Sea.

Page 101. — 48. *brackish*. Salty. The term is usually applied to a mixture of fresh and salty water.

55. ff. See Francis Thompson's passage concerning Shelley's "faculty of make-believe". Shelley has a child's delight in imagining all the wonders of the ocean bed.

74. *Enna*. A city in Sicily.

Page 102. — 84. *asphodel*. A lily which grew in the Elysian fields.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

Shelley's own note on the composition of this poem is interesting:

"This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions."

This "Ode", as has often been pointed out, is at once the most passionate and the most skilfully constructed of Shelley's lyrics. There is an intensity of emotion and a balanced symmetry of form in the five sections of the "Ode" that place it in the very front rank of English lyrical poetry. Professor Dowden refers to it as "the great *Ode to the West Wind*, in which there is a union of lyrical breadth and lyrical intensity unsurpassed in English song".

Compare the long, breathless periods of this poem with the swift-footed lines of *Arethusa* or the pulsating metre of *To A Skylark*.

3. *enchanter*, who has the power to raise spirits and dismiss them at will.

4. *hectic*. Red as with a fever.

12. living hues and odours. Fragrant flowers.

14. hear, O, hear! With this concluding supplication one can imagine a fitful lull in the wind's fury.

Page 103. — 16-17. Just as the wind blows the leaves loosened from the trees before it, so it sweeps along the flying clouds which are the product, not of trees but of the ocean and sky. Compare *The Cloud*—

“I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky.”

18. there—not demonstrative. It is the provisional subject of “are spread” whose true subject comes later—“the locks of the approaching storm”.

21. Mænad. “A frenzied nymph, attendant on Dionysos (Bacchus) in the Greek mythology. May we not call this the most vivid, sustained, and impassioned amongst all Shelley's magical personifications of Nature?” (Palgrave.) The Maenads were also called Bacchantes.

25. the dome of a vast sepulchre. Compare *The Cloud*, lines 79 to 81. The same image seems to be in the poet's mind.

31. coil. Tumult.

32. Baiæ's bay. Part of the Bay of Naples. There was once a large town at Baiæ, famous as a pleasure resort. This is now partially submerged.

40-43. Shelley says of this passage: “The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of the rivers and of lakes, sympathises with that of the land in the change of the seasons, and is, consequently, influenced by the winds which announce it.”

Page 104. — 56. In these few words Shelley has given a remarkably exact picture of his own character.

63-69. In his *Defence of Poetry*, Shelley said: “Poets are the trumpets which sing to battle: poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world”.

CHORUSES FROM “HELLAS”

In April, 1821, Prince Mavrocordato of Greece visited the Shelleys at Pisa. He outlined plans for the liberation of Greece from the rule of the Turks. The poet's imagination was fired, one result

being the composition of the lyric drama, *Hellas*. It was published in November of the same year, dedicated to the Prince "as an imperfect token of the admiration, sympathy and friendship of the author".

Like Byron, Shelley was astonished by the apathy of other countries in Europe to the fate of Greece and the lack of interest shown in her struggle. "We are all Greeks", he exclaims in the Preface to *Hellas*. "Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece."

"*Hellas* was among the last of his compositions, and is among the most beautiful. The choruses are singularly imaginative, and melodious in their versification . . .

"The conclusion of the last chorus is among the most beautiful of his lyrics. The imagery is distinct and majestic; the prophecy, such as poets love to dwell upon, the Regeneration of Mankind—and that regeneration reflecting back splendour on the foregone time, from which it inherits so much of intellectual wealth, and memory of past virtuous deeds, as must render the possession of happiness and peace of tenfold value." (Mrs. Shelley's note).

In the first "Chorus", Shelley reviews the history of political freedom in Europe. He makes the origin of human liberty coincide with the creation of the world.

Page 105. — 4. **banded anarchs.** Powers of darkness and lawlessness, who have united their forces against the powers of Light and Freedom.

5. **Imaus.** A range of mountains in Asia, the modern Himalayas.

9. **Thermopylae and Marathon** stand out in the course of History as supreme examples of the struggle for freedom. Cf. Byron's *The Isles of Greece*, page 64.

11. **The springing fire of Freedom.**

The wingèd glory. The spirit of Freedom.

12. At **Philippi**, the Roman forces under Brutus and Cassius fought their last battle against the army of Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony. For some time the outcome of the battle was undecided but it was ultimately lost by the republican forces—hence Shelley's phrase **half alighted**.

15. "Milan was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederic Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin." (Shelley's note.)

18. Florence, like Venice and Milan, was successful in maintaining her independence as a city state during mediaeval times. She was, during the Renaissance, a great friend to Learning.

Albion. England. It is the genius of the English people to desire liberty above all things.

Switzerland. For centuries Switzerland has been free. Napoleon's attempted subjugation of the little mountain state brought outcries from every quarter.

21. From the West. From the States of America which had gained their independence.

22. Against the . . . doom. From West to East. The Sun's course is from East to West. Throughout history great religious and political movements have usually had their origin in the East and the course of their progress has been from East to West.

25. Atlantis. America. Shelley uses the term as being poetic and suggestive. Atlantis was the name given to the fabled land which is referred to in many works of antiquity and was supposed to exist as an island somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean.

27. Shelley is referring to the abuses of the Revolution and, no doubt, especially to the Napoleonic Wars. Many of the ardent enthusiasts, who, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, had welcomed the French Revolution as a great step forward in the cause of Freedom, were sickened at the abuses that were practised, and finally held that the net result of the Revolution had been detrimental. Byron spoke very plainly:

"But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal hath her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime".

(*Childe Harold, Canto IV*, lines 865-868)

30. "The South of Europe was in a state of great political excitement at the beginning of the year 1821. The Spanish Revolution had been a signal to Italy; secret societies were formed; and, when Naples rose to declare the Constitution, the call was responded to from Brundisium to the foot of the Alps. To crush these attempts to obtain liberty, early in 1821, the Austrians poured their armies

into the Peninsula: at first their coming rather seemed to add energy and resolution to a people long enslaved. The Piedmontese asserted their freedom; Genoa threw off the yoke of the King of Sardinia; and, as if in playful imitation, the people of the little state of Massa and Carrara gave the congé to their sovereign, and set up a republic." (Mrs. Shelley's note).

About the same time many of the German States had received constitutions.

Page 106. — 45-48. The struggle for Freedom must go on. If it cannot be successful, men are better to have died in that struggle than to live on in slavery. A country had better be desolate as a desert if it cannot be a free Paradise.

The *second chorus* gives us an outline of the progress of various systems of religious teaching. Of it Shelley states: "The popular notions of Christianity are represented in this chorus as true in their relation to the worship they superseded, without considering their merits in a relation more universal. The first stanza contrasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets, and to use a common and inadequate phrase, *clothe themselves in matter*, with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world."

53. they. The immortal souls.

54. orient. Rising; used to indicate the beginning or opening of anything. The word may also mean Eastern.

53-62. This passage contains a statement of the theory of transmigration of souls and reincarnation which forms a part of several oriental religions. The nature of each successive incarnation of the soul is conditioned by the progress and development achieved in the preceding one.

Compare the following stanzas (LII and LIII) from *A Century of Indian Epigrams*, by Paul Elmer More.

"Like as our outworn garments we discard,
And other new ones don,
So doth the Soul these bodies doff when marred,
And others new put on . . .

"Like as a goldsmith beateth out his gold
To other fashions fairer than the old,
So may the Spirit, learning ever more,
In ever nobler forms his life enfold."

Page 107. — 63. A Power. Jesus Christ.

64. Promethean. Like Prometheus. Shelley was very much attracted by the legend of Prometheus, the Titan, who angered Jove by stealing fire from heaven and giving it to man. Shelley saw in him a symbol of the man of vision, who seeks to regenerate society and, in so doing, finds himself opposed by despotic, tyrannical forces in the world.

67-69. Human limitations did not prevail over the Saviour. His passion for humanity was so ardent that it glorified His whole existence.

73. The crescent moon is the symbol of Mohammedanism. Shelley predicts that the Christian Cross will conquer and supplant it.

77-90. The forms of worship known among pagan peoples fled before the Truth as expressed in the teaching of Jesus. It is interesting to compare with this stanza, Milton's *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, stanzas XIX to XXV.

In the final chorus, the poet gives us his vision of the Golden Age which he feels is coming, an age in which those things which have stood for the greatest achievements of civilisation and culture, will be far surpassed.

One must remember that the Chorus is composed of Greeks,—hence the allusions to Greek Literature, Religion and History. Shelley says of this Chorus: "The final chorus is indistinct and obscure, as the event of the living drama whose arrival it foretells. Prophecies of war and rumours of war may safely be made by poet and prophet in any age, but to anticipate, however darkly, a period of regeneration and happiness, is a more hazardous exercise of the faculty which bards possess or feign."

94. weeds. garments. (Compare the still common phrase, "widow's weeds").

Page 108. — 97. Hellas. Greece.

99. Peneus. A River in Thessaly.

101. Tempes. Tempe was a valley in Thessaly, famous for its pastoral beauty.

102. Cyclads. The famous group of islands in the Aegean Sea, known as the Cyclades.

103. **Argo.** The ship in which Jason and his Argonauts went in search of the Golden Fleece.

main. The sea.

105. **Orpheus.** The sweet singer of Greek mythology. All nature was affected by his skilful performance upon the lute—(Compare Shakespeare's lovely song,

"Orpheus, with his lute, made trees
And the mountain-tops that freeze
Bow themselves when he did play".)

When the wife of Orpheus, Eurydice, died, the gods were so moved by his sorrow that they permitted him to go to the lower world in search of her. For the full legend see Bulfinch *The Age of Fable*.

108. **Calypso.** A beautiful nymph for love of whom Ulysses interrupted his journey homeward to Ithaca. He spent some time with her in her island home.

109. The poet for a moment hesitates at the possibility that there may be repeated in the future some of the hate, sorrow and destruction which have characterized the past.

111. **Laian rage.** The wrath of the gods which pursued the descendants of Laius, King of Thebes. He was doomed by the gods to endure sorrow and misery. His son, Oedipus, inherited the curse and led a life of terrible suffering as he fulfilled his tragic destiny.

113. The **Sphinx** was a dreadful monster which crouched at the side of the road which led to the city of Thebes. She asked a riddle of all who passed and slew the unhappy ones who were unsuccessful in answering it. Oedipus came by, and proposed the right answer. In anger at his success, the Sphinx destroyed herself.

115. **Athens** was recognised as the centre of all that was best in Greek culture and civilisation.

118. **prime.** Early period, literally, Spring.

121 ff. Shelley's note is helpful: "Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. *All those who fell*, or the gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt; *the One who rose*, or Jesus Christ, at whose appearance the idols of the Pagan World were amerced of their worship; and *the many unsubdued*, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in

succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and, until the revival of learning and the arts, perpetually increasing activity."

Page 109. — 127 ff. Again the visionary chorus shrinks back and hesitates at the thought of the possibility that bloodshed and violence may be necessary if this ideal state is ever to become an accomplished fact. If sorrow and suffering must be the constant lot of man, better far that he should find repose and peace in Death.

TO NIGHT

Here again, as in *The Cloud*, we see Shelley creating myth, giving personality to the vague and abstract. The poem is exquisite both in thought and form.

13. opiate. Sleep-producing.

19. his rest. Much has been made by commentators of the confusion in Shelley's mental image for "the day." In line 11 he refers to it as feminine, in line 19 as masculine. Rossetti suggested that the pronoun should be changed to "her" in the latter instance. In such matters, it is difficult to arrive at certainty and dangerous to dogmatize. There is little to be gained by the alteration, and it is quite possible that the image had actually changed in the poet's mind.

TO ———

Page 110. One word is too often profaned.

The identity of the persons to whom Shelley addressed several of his lyrics, was not disclosed by the poet and, miraculously, has baffled the biographers. Is it not better so? Little, if anything, would be added to the charm and appeal of these delightful verses by the knowledge that they were inspired by this or that person in the circle of Shelley's acquaintance.

In this lyric, the poet speaks of a love that is too fine and spiritual to be expressed in terms of the passion so common among men.

"WHEN THE LAMP IS SHATTERED"

Page 111. — In this composition, and that which precedes it, we have evidence of the degree to which Shelley was a creature of moods. In *Music when soft voices die*, we see him exalted by the faith that all beautiful things, including Love, will linger on in

memory and prove a source of comfort. In *When the Lamp is Shattered*, he cries out that all things will pass away, that nothing has more than a fragmentary, fleeting existence. Even human affection can last but a moment, and then fails, leaving the weaker heart broken and desolate, naked to the mockery of cruel fate. The deep dejection of the latter poem was, as we saw before, characteristic of Shelley and gives real point to Mrs. Shelley's statement, which was certainly true for her husband: "It is the nature of that poetry which overflows from the soul oftener to express sorrow and regret than joy"

TENNYSON

TENNYSON was born in the rectory of Somersby, Lincolnshire, in 1809, one of twelve children of a scholarly father and a gentle, refined mother. Several of the children were poetically inclined, particularly Charles and Frederick. At seven, Alfred was sent to the Grammar School at Louth, but he was so unhappy there, and suffered so much at the hands of his brutal masters, that, after four years, he was taken home and prepared for the University by his father. He was already writing poetry, his first volume, in which his brothers collaborated, being published in 1827. Next year he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where he quickly became famous for his ability in poetic composition and was soon the centre of a group of brilliant young men, among whom was Arthur Henry Hallam. In 1830, he published his first independent volume, *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, in which there was much promise. In 1831 Tennyson left the University without taking a degree, one reason for this being the poverty of the family. His father died a few months later. The family, however, was allowed to live on in the Rectory at Somersby, and there Tennyson retired to read and study. He wrote poetry constantly and, in 1832, brought out a volume of *Poems*. In spite of the fact that it contained such treasures as *The Lotos-Eaters*, *A Dream of Fair Women*, *Oenone* and *The Lady of Shalott*, and that many critics think Tennyson never surpassed it in beauty of expression, the volume was greeted with merciless criticism from the critics of the *Quarterly*. This fact, combined with the death, in 1833, of his dear friend Hallam, plunged Tennyson into the deepest dejection. One may hear his sad cry in the elegy *Break, Break, Break!* During the next ten years, the poet published nothing. He went with his family from place to place trying to forget his sorrow and establish a home. He was, of course, still writing and, in 1842, at the urgent request of his friends, published a volume of *Poems*. The work was immediately successful, a fact that can be easily understood when one remembers that it contained *Ulysses*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *Dora*, *The Gardener's Daughter* and *Break, Break, Break*. From this time on Tennyson's fame grew steadily. The year 1850 was for him one of triumph. In it, he married the woman of his choice, Emily Sellwood, he published *In Memoriam*, and was appointed poet-laureate. In the same year, he established at Farringford, in the Isle of Wight, the first permanent home that he had known since the Somersby days. The remainder of the poet's life was rather uneventful. Honours were showered upon him by the Universities and the state. He was sought after by hosts of loving friends and admirers, among whom he numbered the gracious Queen Victoria. In 1884, he was raised to the peerage with the title of Baron of Aldworth and Farringford. He died at Aldworth on October 6, 1892, and, six days later, was buried in Westminster Abbey,

“To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior’s pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.”

Death is end

THE LOTOS-EATERS

This poem is one of many for which the poet’s inspiration came from classical literature. The subject treated here is taken from Homer’s *Odyssey*, Book IX, line 82 ff.—“But on the tenth day we set foot on the land of the Lotos-Eaters, who feed on food of flowers. . . . I sent forward ship mates to go and ask what manner of men they might be who lived in the land by bread, having picked out two men, and sent a third with them to be a herald. And they went their way forthwith and mixed with the Lotos-Eaters; so the Lotos-Eaters plotted not harm to our ship-mates, but gave them lotos to eat. But whoever of them ate the honey-sweet fruit of the lotos, no longer was he willing to bring back tidings or to come back; but there they wished to abide, feeding on the lotos with the Lotos-Eaters, and all forgetful of home.”

The germ idea of Tennyson’s poem is here, but the poet has given it a marvelously full development.

The form used in the first five sections is the Spenserian Stanza which, as was pointed out formerly in discussing Byron’s use of the form, is particularly well suited to pictorial, descriptive composition. Throughout the poem the reader meets echoes or reminiscences of the classics in which Tennyson was well versed—sometimes it is a phrase which is almost a translation of Virgil or Homer, sometimes a passage which is distinctly classical in feeling and spirit.

The poem was first published in 1833. It was much altered (particularly the latter part) and published in the 1842 volume. Students will find it very much worth while to compare the 1832-33 version of the poem with that published in 1842. In the latter, Tennyson reveals himself as much more definitely master of his art.

Page 113. — 1. he said. Ulysses, the leader of the little band of sailors who, for ten years, wandered over the seas in search of their home, the island of Ithaca.

3. From the first line of the poem Tennyson is consciously seeking to create an atmosphere of languor and lazy drowsiness. In a note

on this line he says: " 'The strand' was, I think, my first reading, but the no rhyme of 'land' and 'land' was lazier".

5. *swoon*. The verb suggests the languor and faintness of the air in the island.

8-11. We are fortunate to have two notes of Tennyson on the imagery of these lines. Of line 8 he writes: "Taken from the waterfall at Gavarnie, in the Pyrenees, when I was 20 or 21". Of line 11 he wrote, "Lying among these mountains (the Pyrenees) before a waterfall that comes down one thousand or twelve hundred feet, I sketched it (according to my custom then) in these words—

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn.

When I printed this, a critic informed me that lawn was the material used in theatres to imitate a waterfall and graciously added: 'Mr. T. should not go to the boards of a theatre but to Nature herself for his suggestions.'—And I had gone to Nature herself".

18. *clomb*. An old strong past tense of the verb "climb".

shadowy pine. Tennyson was always very fond of such highly picturesque expressions.

19. Even the sunset seems to share the languid indifference of the rest of the island.

23. *galingale*. A tall-growing, slender marsh plant; one of the sedges.

25-26. An excellent example of Tennyson's love of an exact picture.

faces pale is too vague and so he adds the following fine descriptive line.

26. *rosy flame*. Of sunset.

Page 114. — 30-36. The effect of the narcotic upon Ulysses' sailors is described with details which most people who have taken a narcotic drug or an anaesthetic will agree are exact and accurate.

34. *as voices from the grave*. Ghosts were spoken of frequently in literature as having thin, high-pitched voices. Compare *Hamlet* (I, i)—"the sheeted dead did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets".

37. *They*. The mariners.

42. barren. Hopeless. Their wanderings over the sea questing for home have been in vain.

CHORIC SONG

The poet now alters the movement of his composition to a metre more lyrical and suggestive of singing. In the chorus which follows, the mariners express the folly of struggling with difficulties today which seem ever to lead to new obstacles tomorrow. They fortify their position by reference to the Epicurean philosophy that man should enjoy the present moment. The future he cannot foresee and, as for the gods, they care nothing for his happiness—rather they seem to find satisfaction in his misery and suffering.

51. Tennyson's note on the spelling of *tir'd* in this line indicates how important he considered the musical effect of his lines. "I printed, contrary to my custom, '*tir'd*' not '*tired*' for fear that the readers might pronounce the word '*tiréd*', whereas I wished them to read it '*tiërd*', prolonging as much as might be the diphthongic *i*."

53-56. Note the drowsy effect produced by the rhyme of *deep*, *creep*, *weep*, *sleep* and the lengthening of each successive line until we come to the long Alexandrine (56).

56. *poppy*. This flower is often used by poets to suggest sleep or the effect of narcotics.

Page 115. — 57. It has been pointed out that this stanza contains ideas which seem to be a reminiscence of Bion's 5th *Idyll*—

"Wretched men and weary that we are, how sorely we toil, how greatly we cast our souls away on gain, and laborious arts, continually coveting yet more wealth! Surely we have all forgotten that we are men condemned to die, and how short is the hour that is to us allotted by Fate." (Lang's translation).

70. The following lines are most artistic. They contain a fine example of those analogies from Nature, of which Tennyson was very fond.

84. Churton Collins has pointed out how similar the idea here is to Virgil's *Aeneid*—IV, 451—"Taedet coeli convexa tueri", it wearies one to behold the vault of the sky.

85 ff. Here we have a rather full expression of the Epicurean philosophy. The reader will often imagine he hears echoes of Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam.

Page 116. — 88. Note the effect of the repetition of the brief sentence, *Let us alone*.

104. *whisper'd speech*. Compare, above, line 34, note.

106-107. These two lines are most effective, partly because of their picturesqueness and partly because of the skill with which the consonants and vowels are employed,—*crisping ripples* and *curving . . . creamy spray*.

114. Stanza VI was added entire in the 1842 edition of the poem. It contains a most appealing element—the memory of home and loved ones, upon which the mariners wish henceforth to turn their backs.

Page 117. — 118. Our wealth and property has been taken over by *Our sons* (who believe us dead). If we entered our homes now we should be like men risen from the dead.

121. *eat*. The old past participle. To be pronounced to rhyme with “*get*”.

133. *amaranth*. The fadeless flower of Greek mythology.

moly. A plant with magic properties. Ulysses used it to overcome the Sorceress, Circe.

142. *acanthus*. A plant with large, graceful leaves. These were copied by sculptors and architects and we are familiar with their form since they occur frequently on the Capitals of Corinthian pillars.

145. Of the following section, so largely altered from the earlier version, Mr. Stopford Brooke says: “This is the work of a great artist, and in this steady improvement of his poems, Tennyson stands almost alone. Other poets,—Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats—did not recast their poems in this wholesale fashion, and the additions and changes which they made were by no means always improvements. Tennyson, working with his clear sense of what was artistic, and with the stately steadiness which belonged to his character, not only improved but doubled the value of the poems he altered.”

Page 118. — 150. Notice the brief change in the movement of the lines. For a moment the surge of the sea and the laborious rowing of the sailors enter the verse.

164. Compare *Macbeth's* despairing reference to life—

“It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”. (Act V, Sc. 1).

169. **Elysian.** The Elysian fields are represented in Homer as the Greek heaven where heroes live again after death.

170. **asphodel.** The lily which is constantly referred to in mythology as growing in Elysium.

Tennyson has, of course, altered the Homeric story where Ulysses tells us. "Therefore, I led them (his sailors who had eaten the lotos) back to the ships weeping, and sore against their will, and dragged them beneath the benches, and bound them in the hollow barques. But I commanded the rest of my well-loved company to make speed and go on board the swift ships, lest haply any should eat the lotos and be forgetful of returning. Right soon they embarked and sat upon the benches and sitting orderly they smote the grey sea water with their oars."

ULYSSES

This poem was first published in 1842 and, unlike so many of Tennyson's poems, has remained unaltered. Tennyson said of it: "The poem was written soon after Arthur Hallam's death and it gives the feeling about the need of going forward and braving the struggle of life, perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*".

Ulysses, like *The Lotos-Eaters*, owes its inspiration to the *Odyssey*. In this case, however, Tennyson has treated the classical subject with much greater freedom than in the former. Homer's Ulysses settles down, on his return to Ithaca, to spend the remainder of his life in his little kingdom with his faithful wife, Penelope. Tennyson brings him before us as a man who has acquired such a passion for travel and adventure that he cannot rest. For him, the greatest evil would be to "rust unburnished". Stifled by the narrow customs of the island and disgusted with the petty view of life held by his subjects, he calls his mariners about him, the only souls in Ithaca who understand him, and with them prepares to launch out into the sea of fresh endeavour. The character of Ulysses, thus altered, adequately represents, as Stopford Brooke has pointed out, "the soul that cannot rest, whom the unknown always allures to action—the image of the exact opposite of the temper of mind of the Lotos-Eaters". It is the spirit which, in the 19th century, characterised the scientist in his tireless research, and the pioneer seeking ever to give reality to his vision of empire building.

Stopford Brooke has expressed very exactly Tennyson's poetic practice, as shown in this poem—"When he takes a classical subject,

he builds it up with one underlying thought which, running through the whole of the poem, gives it unity. He chooses a simple thought, common to all mankind; felt by the ancients, but to which he gives continual touches and variations which grow out of modern life and out of his own soul."

It has been suggested by Churton Collins that Tennyson found the germ of the idea which prompted the expansion of Ulysses' character in Dante's *Inferno*, XXVI, 94-126. In this passage Ulysses is telling his story to Dante:

"When I departed from Circe, who had retained me more than a year there near to Gaeta, before Aeneas had so named it, neither fondness for my son, nor piety for my old father, nor the due love that should have made Penelope glad, could overcome within me the ardor that I had to gain experience of the world, and of the vices of men, and of their valor. But I put forth on the deep, open sea, with one vessel only, and with that little company by which I had not been deserted. One shore and the other I saw as far as Spain, far as Morocco and the Island of Sardinia, and the rest which that sea bathes round about. I and my companions were old and slow when we came to that narrow strait where Hercules set up his bounds, to the end that man may not put out beyond. On the right hand I left Seville, on the other already I had left Ceuta. 'O brothers,' said I, 'who through a hundred thousand perils have reached the West, to this so little vigil of your senses that remains be ye unwilling to deny the experience, following the sun, of the world that hath no people. Consider ye your origin; ye were not made to live as brutes, but for pursuit of virtue and of knowledge.' With this little speech I made my companions so eager for the road that hardly afterwards could I have held them back. And turning our stern to the morning, with our oars we made wings for the mad flight, always gaining on the left hand side."

Ulysses is commonly recognized as Tennyson's finest composition in the form of the Dramatic Monologue. The blank verse of the poem moves with a certainty and dignity which has seldom been surpassed. Carlyle considered it by far the finest poem Tennyson had composed up to that time (1842).

Page 119. — 2. these barren crags. Ithaca, a small island near the entrance to the Gulf of Corinth.

3. an agèd wife. Penelope.

mete and dole. Measure out carefully. The words are filled with Ulysses' scorn for these islanders who have no idea of life beyond the narrow activities of their island existence. The word feed in line 5 contains the same feeling.

5. know not me. Do not understand me.

10. the rainy Hyades. A group of stars in the constellation "Taurus". Tennyson is, perhaps, recalling a phrase from Virgil's *Aeneid*—I, 744, "Arcturum, pluviasque Hyadas, geminosque Triones".

11. the dim sea. Such expressions contain the spirit of classical poetry.

I am become a name. I have become famous.

17. ringing plains. The plains of Troy filled with the din of battle.

19-21. "Our experience at once reveals and limits our perception of the possibilities of life and knowledge; these last are infinite, and, therefore, our advance only serves to widen our perception of their extent. So, experience may be compared to an arch, which at once enables us to see, and limits our vision of, the world beyond, whose horizon continually recedes as we approach." (Alexander).

These, and the lines immediately following, contain a wonderfully successful expression of the insatiable yearning of the *Ulysses* type of human character for ever larger and richer experiences in life. For such the attainment of any particular stage of existence is merely a challenge to go further into the still unconquered realms of thought and experience. Such men do not "live by bread alone", their life is not merely a matter of breathing—it is a great spiritual adventure.

Page 120. — 29. three suns. Three years.

30. this gray spirit yearning in desire. The expression may be an absolute construction,—“While this spirit grown old in experience (gray) yearns in desire. . . .” It may also be taken as co-ordinate with “myself”.

33. Telemachus is represented as the opposite type from his father—a young man who, by experience and temperament, is fitted to carry on the necessary and often monotonous routine of every-day life. Ulysses speaks of him with complete tolerance, realising that each of them has his own particular work in life to do. Society must have its pioneers: it must likewise have those who,

with patient wisdom, consolidate the gains which have been made in the course of human progress.

40. *decent*. The word is here used in the broader sense which was common formerly—"careful, ceremonious, acting with due regard for decorum".

44. The touches of landscape here and later add greatly to the imaginative appeal of the poem.

45. In the *Odyssey* all Ulysses' fellow mariners were lost in ship wrecks and he landed companionless upon the island.

53. The Gods took sides in the Trojan struggle and were said, indeed, to have appeared in battle—Mars and Venus fighting for the Trojans and, hence, against the Greeks.

55. Note the slow, deliberation of the line which is produced by the pauses and the long monosyllabic words.

58-59. *sitting . . . furrows*—An echo of Homer. Compare the passage quoted at the end of the notes on *The Lotos-Eaters*.

60-61. The Greek poets thought of the stars as plunging into the Ocean Stream which encompassed the earth.

Page 121. — 63. *the Happy Isles*. The islands of the blessed, the Greek Paradise, thought to exist somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean.

64. *Achilles*. The greatest of the Greek warriors at Troy. It was he who slew Hector.

70. Stopford Brooke might, with justice, speak of the unity of this poem. The central idea has run through the whole composition to find magnificent emphasis in the simple force of this last line.

"BREAK, BREAK, BREAK"

This poem was composed in 1833 under the immediate sense of sorrow and loss at the death of Arthur Hallam. Stopford Brooke says of it—"A piece of perfect work, fully felt, and fully finished, simple and profound—and with what fine art Nature is inwoven with its passion!"

Perhaps nothing adds more to the bitterness of a personal sorrow than the realization that the world around you goes on unaltered, indeed, apparently unaware of your unutterable grief. Children shout and laugh at their play, men go singing about their work, the commerce and traffic of the world proceeds as usual. Your

bereavement is intensified by the sense that you and you alone feel the awful significance of the fact that the world has been made a void by the removal of one who can never return.

The poem was published in 1842.

SONGS FROM "THE PRINCESS"

Page 122. — *The Princess* was first published in 1847. When a third edition was brought out in 1850, there were included six songs, one placed after each section of the story. Of these, two are published in the present volume—*Sweet and Low* and the *Bugle Song*. The other two songs—*Tears*, *Idle Tears* and *Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal*—formed part of the text and were published in the original edition.

"SWEET AND LOW"

This charming lullaby, which, as Stopford Brooke has said, "writes its own music," has sung its way into the hearts of English speaking people, as surely as have the songs of Burns.

Note the picturesqueness of many of these lines—

"Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon".

Note, also, the musical rhythm of the poem, the suggestion of rocking and crooning of a mother putting her child to sleep.

"BUGLE SONG"

Tennyson said that this song—"was written after hearing the echoes at Killarney in 1848. When I was there, I heard a bugle blown beneath the 'Eagle's Nest', and eight distinct echoes."

Stopford Brooke writes of this lovely lyric: "It sings in its short compass, of four worlds, of ancient chivalry, of wild nature, of romance where the horns of Elfland blow, and of the greater future of mankind. And in singing the last, it touches the main subject of love, love not of person to person, but of each life to all the lives that follow it."

The poem is a fine piece of poetic harmony and, at the same time, is full of suggestion. It sets the imagination free in a world of rare, mysterious beauty.

Page 123. — 31-32. Note how deftly Tennyson spiritualizes the material of his poem. The bugle echoing and re-echoing through

the mountain glens becomes a symbol of the influence, often unconscious, which one soul exerts upon another and which, when once set going, proceeds forever.

“TEARS, IDLE TEARS”

“Form and thought are so delicately fused in this that it stands out even among Tennyson’s marvellous workmanship, as something singular and unmatched. The arrangement of words is so musical, that, as Tennyson himself pointed out, few people observe that it is an unrhymed lyric. The recurrent cadence of the last line of each stanza helps the effect, and nothing seems lacking.”

(S. E. Cameron.)

Tennyson’s own note is, as usual, interesting: “This song came to me on the yellowing autumn-tide at Tintern Abbey, full for me of its bygone memories. It is the sense of the abiding in the transient.”

An early manuscript of the poem shows that Tennyson first wrote “Ah foolish tears”. The alteration is a wonderful improvement.

41. “That brings the ship bearing our friends above the horizon”.

43. verge. Edge; here, the horizon.

51. fancy. Love.

“NOW SLEEPS THE CRIMSON PETAL”

This song is chiefly notable for its simplicity, its picturesqueness and the tender emotion expressed in it. The pictures which are suggested are full of the enchantment, the mystery, the stillness of a moonlit summer night. Roger Quilter has composed an exquisite and highly suitable musical setting for the words.

57. gold fin. The fin of the gold fish in their “porphyry font”.

Page 124. — 62. “Zeus came down to Danaë when shut up in the tower in a shower of golden stars.” (Tennyson’s note).

65-69. This final image is full of simple, tender emotion. There is not a trace of forcing or artificiality in the style.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

In Memoriam was first published in 1850. It had been composed, however, at intervals during the seventeen years since the death, at Vienna, in 1833, of Tennyson’s college friend, Arthur Henry Hallam. In this long poem, which consists of a Prelude, 131 sections

and an Epilogue, Tennyson has traced for us the course of his grief-stricken heart and mind as they groped their way from the moment of the first bewilderment of sorrow, through the long days and weeks of doubt and questioning—questioning of the love and wisdom of Providence, doubt and anxiety concerning the life after death—to the final triumph of Faith over scepticism. The early Victorian Age was one in which honest men were bewildered by doubt. Science, with its newly enunciated theories, seemed to have struck a blow at the very root of religious Faith. In the course of *In Memoriam*, Tennyson touched upon many of the most disturbing problems of the day and the great elegy was looked upon as his answer to the scepticism that prevailed around him. No single work of his did more to gain him that position which he held in the minds of his contemporaries as the great prophet, the inspired “vates” of his age. From Queen Victoria to her humblest subjects, all felt that Tennyson had helped to answer some of the baffling riddles of life and death, and had furnished his fellowmen with a rich source of comfort and consolation.

PRELUDE

Page 124. — This section of the poem which stands as Introduction seems to have been the last written. It contains a clear and forceful declaration of the power of Faith and Love to conquer where Reason alone will fail.

1. Strong Son of God. Jesus Christ.
4. This was Tennyson's final position, that many things in the universe did not admit of proof and must be accepted on Faith.
5. orbs of light and shade. The sun and the moon.
8. Christ was victorious over death.

9-16. These two stanzas contain the gist of much that is said at greater length elsewhere in the poem. The bereaved Tennyson cannot believe that man, with all his noble attributes, was made for death and “there an end”. He longs for complete conviction and finally asserts his willingness to submit to the wisdom of a just God of Love.

Page 125. — 27. “That mind and soul may combine to produce a perfect harmony, vaster than either mind or soul could utter if working alone.”

32. Nothing is a greater test of the nobility of man than his reaction to the revelation of divine Truth.

33. Tennyson here utters a profound philosophic conception—there can be no merit on the side of man when he is judged by divine standards. One man may seem superior to his fellow men and to him other men may pay tribute of admiration and praise, but, in the presence of God and His Son, the best of men must be conscious only of short-comings for which they plead forgiveness.

37-44. Inasmuch as his grief for Hallam may seem to have been a protest against the Wisdom and Love of God, the poet prays for forgiveness for this, and pleads that he may be given the wisdom required to perceive the true purpose of bereavement and sorrow.

“ I SOMETIMES HOLD IT HALF A SIN ”

This is the 5th section of the poem. It contains a statement of the difficulty of giving expression to his grief but, withal, the sense of comfort that comes when he has “given his sorrow words”.

Page 126. — 53. weeds. Garments.

“ ONE WRITES THAT ‘OTHER FRIENDS REMAIN’ ”

This is section 6 of the poem.

71-72. The sailor son is being given burial at sea.

73 ff. Tennyson’s son, Hallam, Lord Tennyson says:

“My father was writing to Arthur Hallam in the hour that he died”.

“ MORE THAN MY BROTHERS ARE TO ME ”

This is the 79th section of “In Memoriam”. It is addressed to the poet’s brother, Charles Tennyson Turner, of whom Tennyson wrote to Gladstone—“He was almost the most lovable being I have ever met.”

Page 127. — 104. in fee. In possession as his by right.

Page 128. —

“ SWEET AFTER SHOWERS, AMBROSIAL AIR ”

This, the 86th section, is one of many in which Tennyson turns to the beauty of Nature and finds comfort in it. He prays the light wind which is clearing the heavens of clouds to fan his cheek and cool his fever, banishing all thought of Death and Doubt, until they are replaced by the spirit of Peace, which he feels dominating all others in Nature at that moment.

121. ambrosial air. It was a west wind. (Tennyson’s note).

127. the hornéd flood. Between two promontories. (Tennyson’s note).

135. orient star. Any rising star is here intended. (Tennyson’s note).

TITHONUS

This poem was first published in the *Cornhill Magazine* in February, 1860. Tennyson wrote, "my friend, Thackeray, and his publishers had been so urgent with me to send them something, that I ferreted among my old books and found this *Tithonus*, written upwards of a quarter of a century ago".

Here, as in *Ulysses*, Tennyson has employed the Dramatic Monologue form. He has taken an old classical myth and filled it with a meaning which men in all ages can comprehend. Tithonus was the brother of Priam, King of Troy. He gained the love of Eos, the Goddess of the Dawn, often known as Aurora. Wishing to have Tithonus always with her, Eos asked Zeus to grant him the gift of immortality. Unfortunately, she neglected to ask, too, that he be granted eternal youth. The myth relates how Tithonus, unable to die, wasted away until, taking pity on his hideousness, Eos converted him into a grasshopper.

In Tennyson's poem we find Tithonus grown old, a mere "gray shadow" of his former self. He must live constantly in the presence of Eos, whom he had loved in his youth, and must find himself barred by age from entering into her joys and delights. Throughout the poem he addresses the Goddess, pleading that she will release him and allow him to die like other men and all the things of Nature.

Page 129. — In the very first lines of the poem the note is struck which is to sound through the whole composition.

7. the quiet limit of the world. A vague phrase describing the East which is the habitation of Eos.

18. thy strong Hours indignant. Time was angry that a mortal should be given the power to live beyond the ordinary span of man's life.

20. could not end me. Because of Jove's gift.

25. the silver star. Venus.

Page 130. — 32-42. This passage contains a marvellous description of the coming of dawn expressed in terms of mythology. One is reminded of the imagery of Shelley. (Compare *The Cloud*).

39. the wild team. Aurora is usually represented as drawn in a chariot by swift horses, announcing the approach of the Sun.

42. Note the exquisite imagery of the line describing the fleecy, golden clouds which appear in the East as the Dawn proceeds.

46-49. The plight of Tithonus is made all the more pitiable because of the suspicion that is dawning upon him that Eos may not have the power to recall the gift of Zeus.

53-57. Another beautiful picture of the brightening Dawn.

62. Apollo. God of the Sun and of Music. Mythology held that it was he who built the City of Troy (Ilium), the towers of which rose to his music.

Page 131. — 71. barrows. Graves. How keenly Tithonus envies ordinary men their power to die and lie down in the quiet grave!

76. on thy silver wheels. A reference to the chariot in which Eos rode forth at Dawn.

TIRESIAS

Here again Tennyson has employed the Dramatic Monologue form. This time he has taken his story from Greek mythology—an incident in the tragic history of the City of Thebes. Tiresias was a Theban soothsayer who, in youth, angered Minerva and was by her deprived of sight. Later, the goddess relented and granted Tiresias the power to foresee the future. But the gift brought him no happiness because he was doomed to share the curse of all those who see more clearly than their fellows the inner meaning of events,—the curse of unbelief on the part of his hearers—and so, time and time again he had been unable to persuade his fellow citizens to turn aside from a path which he saw led to their doom.

Tennyson has chosen, as the time of his poem, the occasion of the attack upon Thebes of the seven Argive heroes under the leadership of Polynices. The city is distracted with anxiety. In this hour of peril, Tiresias has consulted the oracle and has been assured by Mars that the only hope of the city lies in the willingness of one of the Thebans, a descendant of Cadmus, to offer his life as a sacrifice to the Gods. Tiresias has summoned Menœceus, son of Creon, and it is to him the blind soothsayer speaks.

Page 131. — 3. roofs of sight. Eyelids.

5. ambush'd. Hidden. Tiresias in youth had thirsted for knowledge. In the following lines, Tennyson refers to some of the means employed by the priests in determining the will of the Gods.

9. My son. The young Menœceus.

11. Ares. Mars, the God of War.

12-13. *guiltless heirs . . . thou art.* "The Thebans, who, like you, are descended from Cadmus." Cadmus, son of Agenor, King of Phoenicia, was the mythical founder of the City of Thebes. While working upon the foundations of the city, he sent some of his men to bring water from a clear fountain nearby, that he might pour out a libation to the gods. They were attacked and killed by a great serpent which dwelt in a cave guarding the springs of Dirce. Angered at this, Cadmus slew the monster, all unaware that it lived under the protection of Mars. The wrath of the god was thus aroused by Cadmus and a curse was placed upon him and all his descendants.

Page 132. — 16. *The dragon.* The serpent.

17. *The God's.* Mars'.

21. *The mystery of the gods and their will for mortals.*

26. *Subjected to.* Adjacent to.

Heliconian ridge. The range of Mt. Helicon, a mountain sacred to the muses.

27. *my wont.* My custom.

33. *five-fold thy term.* Tiresias was reputed to be very old.

40. *Pallas Athene.* In Roman legends called Minerva, Goddess of wisdom and power.

44. *helm.* Helmet.

47. *dark.* Blind.

Page 133. — 55. *Ineffable.* Unutterable; that cannot be expressed in speech.

out of whom. From Pallas Athene came alike his physical blindness and his power of prophecy.

59. *their unbelief.* The incredulity of his fellow citizens.

65. *issue.* Result.

67. *flinging fruit to lions.* Casting pearls before swine.

68. *the twain.* The two opposing factions in civil strife.

73-76. Despotism brings as its logical result, revolt,—democracy allowed to run riot and abused leads back as logically to despotism. The course of history provides many illustrations of the truth of this.

77. ff. The vain yearning of Tiresias to serve his country makes him a pitiable figure.

Page 134. — 87-88. *immerging*. Plunging. The man who is prevented from giving any outward token of his high ideals and patriotic devotion is compelled to seek comfort and satisfaction in his own soul.

92. *ringing axles!* The ringing axles of the war chariots of the "Seven".

97. *song-built towers and gates*. Apollo, God of Music, was always represented as being interested in the founding and building of cities. Hence arose the legend that certain cities were built to music—Troy, Thebes—(*Tithonus*, line 62 and 63, page 130). Compare the legend concerning Camelot, King Arthur's City.

99. *rams*. Battering rams, employed by the Greeks and Romans to break down the walls of cities.

Page 135. — 128. *it*. The purpose.

133. *these*. The Thebans.

134. *yon marble girth*. The city's walls.

Page 136. — 147. *Sphinx*—Cf. Shelley's *Choruses from 'Hellas'*—line 113, page 108.

164. *maiden*. Youthful and unstained.

168-184. As in the case of *Tithonus*, life has grown to be a burden for *Tiresias*. He longs to be gathered to his rest, to be set free from an existence where he has found the wise man's word, . . . trampled by the populace underfoot.

171. *their ocean-islets*. The islands of the blessed; the Happy Isles—(Cf. *Ulysses* line 63, page 121).

BROWNING

ROBERT BROWNING was born on the outskirts of London, at Camberwell, in 1812. His father was descended from a line of business men and held an official post in the Bank of England. His mother was a sensitive, cultured woman, intensely fond of music, the daughter of a German merchant who had settled in Scotland. The boy's brief formal education was received at a private school and was supplemented by wide reading and study at home under the supervision of his father. The boy received instruction in vocal and instrumental music as well as in theory and composition. Indeed, he was so talented in this art that he thought of devoting himself to it as a profession. Browning early began to write poetry. His first published work was *Pauline* (1833) which owed its inspiration to the young man's admiration for Shelley. *Paracelsus* (1835) won more favourable comment from the critics and his tragedies *Strafford* (1837) and *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* (1841) were produced by the great actor, Macready. From 1841 to 1846 he produced, under the general title of *Bells and Pomegranates*, a series of volumes which contained the bulk of his finest poetry. In 1846, he married the poetess Elizabeth Barrett. It has been said that this event, rather than his poetry, made him immediately famous. The marriage was a romantic one and Browning and his wife, who had been for years an invalid, spent fifteen ideally happy years in Italy, living at Pisa and Florence. When Mrs. Browning died in 1861, her now famous husband returned to London where his one son, Robert Barrett Browning, was educated. From this time the poet spent his time alternately in London and Venice, where his residence, the Palazzo Rezzonico has become an object of pilgrimage to lovers of Browning visiting the city. Wherever he went, the poet was received by hosts of courteous and loving friends. He died in Venice on December 12, 1889, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

The poetic style of Browning is marked by a rugged vigour and an indifference to melodious, musical effects which are in sharp contrast with the qualities of the verse of Tennyson with whom Browning is always associated. What strikes the reader most forcibly, however, in the latter's poetry, is the singular unity of thought which it reveals. The poet's conception of the Universe is strong and firm. Never for a moment do his optimism, his courage and his faith in man and God waver.

"PIPPA PASSES"

Under the general title of *Bells and Pomegranates*, Browning, in 1841, began the publication of what was to be a series of eight cheaply printed pamphlets containing his poetry. In the first of these *Pippa Passes*, *A Drama*, was published.

The scene of *Pippa Passes*, which is quite unsuccessful theatrically, is laid in the little village of Asolo, near Venice, with which Browning was very much charmed on the occasion of his visit there in 1838. The drama revolves around Pippa, a little silk winder, and the whole action takes place within the twenty-four hours of her one holiday in the year. It opens with Pippa rising from sleep at dawn, determined to fill her day as full as possible of pleasure. As she contemplates the opportunity that lies before her, she exclaims:—

“What shall I please today?
My morn, noon, eve and night—how spend my day?
To-morrow I must be Pippa who winds silk,
The whole year round, to earn just bread and milk:
But, this one day, I have leave to go,
And play out my fancy’s fullest games;
I may fancy all day—and it shall be so—
That I taste of the pleasures, am called by the names
Of the Happiest Four in our Asolo”.

And so she passes through the village,—in morning, past the shrub-house of Ottima, the faithless wife of Luca; at noon, past the house of Jules, the young sculptor; in the evening, past the “turret on the Hill”, where Luigi and his mother meet and talk; at night, past the Bishop’s brother’s house, whither Monsignor has come from Rome “to say here masses proper to release a soul from pain”. She plays no active part in the drama of each group but, as she passes, she sings and her artless song, overheard, unconsciously influences the actions and lives of all four groups.

The first song is a gay carol of joy at the beauty of the morning, expressing faith in God and the wisdom and justice of the Power that regulates the universe. This song is often quoted as an illustration of Browning’s own attitude towards life which he found good.

The second song is overheard by Jules and his companion, Phene. It suggests briefly the story of Caterina (or Kate) Cornaro. To quote Jules:

“What name was that the little girl sang forth?
Kate? The Cornaro, doubtless, who renounced
The crown of Cyprus to be lady here
At Asolo, where still her memory stays,
And peasants sing how once a certain page
Pined for the grace of her so far above
His power of doing good to, ‘Kate the Queen—
She never could be wronged, be poor’, be sighed
‘Need him to help her!’

Yes, a bitter thing
To see our lady above all need of us”.

Caterina was born in Venice. She married James Lusignan, King of Cyprus. After her husband's death, she became Queen of Cyprus. She was forced to abdicate by the government of Venice when the Venetian State took possession of the island of Cyprus. She was given a home and estate at Asolo, where she formed a little court. There she won the love and respect of her people by her goodness and generosity. The story employed by Browning in this song is one of the legends concerning her.

The first five lines of each stanza must be thought of as being sung by Kate's devoted page; the remaining lines give us the comments upon his song by the Queen and her maid.

Page 138. — 9. Oh that Fate would give her but the least reason for regarding me with favour!

18. If only she had suffered some wrong, how quickly I would come to her assistance!

26. hawks. Falcons used in hunting.

jesses. Thongs for the hawk's legs to tether them to the falconer's wrist.

MY LAST DUCHESS

This poem was first published in 1842 in the third number of *Bells and Pomegranates*. It was there entitled *Italy*.

In this poem, which is written in the dramatic monologue form, one of the Dukes of Ferrara speaks, revealing himself to be a typical Renaissance husband and patron of the arts. He describes his former wife. Beneath the egotistical description we can see the lineaments of a pleasure-loving character, chafing under the restraint with which she was hedged round, rebelling against the tyranny of her husband, until by his command, she was suppressed. The vacancy thus created, the Duke hopes to fill by marriage with the fair daughter of "the Count", whose envoy he is at the moment entertaining.

Even in this brief poem, the reader will see Browning's remarkable psychological insight, a quality which made him a master of the Dramatic Monologue.

Page 139. — 3. Frà Pandolf. A quite fictitious artist, as is Claus of Innsbruck, in line 56 below.

21. ff. There is no doubt the Duke had been jealous of the eagerness with which the Duchess had been wont to receive the ready admiration of all who saw her.

Page 140. — 32-34. The Duke's pride had been wounded.

47. The sudden transition of attention from the poor unfortunate Duchess to the business which the Duke and envoy of the Count have in hand, is skilfully done and reveals Browning's knowledge of the working of such a mind as the Duke's.

49-51. The reader must not miss the Duke's shrewdness. He will "drive a hard bargain".

50. pretence. Claim.

54. Again a sudden veering of the Duke's attention, this time to a bit of statuary which he prizes as a connoisseur of art.

MEMORABILIA

This poem was written during the winter of 1853-54, which Browning and Mrs. Browning spent in Rome. It was first published in 1855.

The brief lyric pays homage to Shelley, for whose poetry Browning had a great admiration. The thought is simple enough. Just as an eagle's feather, picked up during a walk, might have the power to transform an otherwise depressing and unattractive plain by lifting the traveller's thoughts to the soaring monarch of the skies,—so a formerly uninteresting character has acquired meaning for Browning by the sudden discovery of the fact that he or she had met Shelley and spoken with him.

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

This poem was published in 1845, in the seventh number of *Bells and Pomegranates*. The poet had not yet fallen as completely under the spell of Italy as he did later. In this exquisite lyric, he expresses the longing which comes upon him in April for the delicate fresh beauty of an English Spring. The garish rankness of Italian flowers is, for the moment, no adequate substitute for the simple beauty of the golden buttercups and the rapturous song of the thrush.

Page 141. — 6. elm-tree bole. The enlarged trunk of the elm tree.

11. The poet, for the moment, is transported. He is carried in thought into his English garden.

Page 142. — 20. Suddenly the poet is brought back to reality, and views with distaste the gaudy melon-flower.

"DE GUSTIBUS—"

De Gustibus—was published in 1855, ten years after the appearance of *Home-Thoughts, From Abroad*. It expresses thoughts and emotions very different from those of the earlier poem. Let the lover of trees and pastoral beauty seek out and haunt the English country-side,—what the poet loves "best in all the world" is Italy with its natural beauty, its air of antiquity, and, above all, its lovable peasantry struggling so pathetically against their country's over-lords.

The title was suggested by an old Latin proverb—"De gustibus non est disputandum," of which the English equivalent is "There's no accounting for tastes".

Page 142. — 5. A sin *Home-Thoughts, From Abroad*, the poet is suddenly carried and carries the reader into the spot he is describing.

9-13. The poet pleads with the ghost to keep out of sight and not interfere with the lovers whose joy will be short-lived enough.

22. cicala. A kind of cricket; cicada.

23. 'tis a cypress. The cypress is one of the commonest and most characteristic details in the Italian landscape.

Page 143. — 30-32. The details of the description of the house are suggestive of its age and partially ruined condition. Browning loved such old houses.

35. the king. Ferdinand II, a member of the Bourbon dynasty, whose rule in Southern Italy was most unpopular. Ferdinand himself was denounced openly by Gladstone in 1851 for his tyranny and cruelty.

36. liver-wing. His right arm.

38. Browning's sympathy with the Italians in their attempts to overthrow the rule of their Austrian and French over-lords is clearly shown in several of his poems—notably *The Italian in England*.

43-44. These lines are cut into the memorial tablet which was erected on the outer wall of the Rezzonico Palace in Venice, where the poet spent so many happy years.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

This poem was written during the winter 1853-54 which Browning and his wife spent in Rome. Mrs. Browning was, at the time, writing *Aurora Leigh*. In the ancient city they found themselves

surrounded by ruins which were melancholy reminders of the transience of material things: great cities with their pomp and splendour, their triumphs in war and state-craft, must pass away, leaving behind them, as frail memorials, a few heaped stones grown over with grass, a shattered column, or, perchance, a ruined turret. Browning was particularly sensitive to the appeal of such things and it is not surprising that he should have been moved to compose on the subject of the present poem. In it a shepherd speaks. He pastures his flocks among the now quiet and solitary fields where once stood a great city, full of "folly, noise and sin". Only broken vestiges of its great walls and palaces remain. Grass and rank vegetation have taken possession. Yet this spot is hallowed by the devoted human love that holds its rendezvous here. For the shepherd and the maiden who awaits him "where the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles", "Love is best".

Ernest Rhys speaks of this as "a noble poem over a dead city. It is one that only Browning could have written, who felt as intensely about old houses, old castles, old cities, as he did about the human folk, living and dead, of his experience."

Page 144. — 29. *vestige*. Trace; something left behind. (Latin —*vestigium*, a foot-print).

33. *pricked their hearts up*. Gave them courage.

Page 145. — 39. *caper*. A shrub, the buds of which, when pickled, are much used in sauces. The shrub grows commonly in Southern Italy.

47. *minions*. Favourites.

57. The charioteer at a tense moment in the race, may have received courage from "the king" and his court, who had seats in the little tower.

Page 146. — 65. *causeys*. Causeways.

ANDREA DEL SARTO

This is one of the most famous and remarkable of Browning's dramatic monologues. It was first published in the volume, *Men and Women*, in 1855. It was written while the poet was living in Florence, and is said to have been inspired by a portrait in the Pitti Palace, which depicts Andrea del Sarto in earnest conversation with his wife:—

"Andrea turns towards her with a pleading expression on his face. . . . His right arm is round her; he leans forward as if searching her face for the strength that has gone from himself. . . . She holds the letter in her hand, and looks neither at that nor at him, but straight out of the canvas. And the beautiful face with the red-brown hair is passive and unruffled, and awfully expressionless. There is silent thunder in this face if there ever was, but there is no anger. It suggests only a very mild, and at the same time, immutable determination to have her own way."

(Ernest Radford's note.)

Mrs. Browning's cousin, John Kenyon, asked the poet to send him a copy of this picture. Browning was unable to secure one and sent him the poem instead.

Andrea del Sarto (Andrea, the son of the tailor) was one of the most promising young painters of the Italian Renaissance. Browning based his study of the man's character upon the account given of him in a life written by George Vasari, who was at one time a pupil of Andrea. It is said that Andrea and Vasari quarrelled, and it is possible that this fact made the younger man more severe in his judgment of his former master than he might otherwise have been. The following passages from Vasari's *Life*, gave Browning the facts from which he developed his extraordinary psychological study of the Faultless Painter.

"Had this master possessed a somewhat bolder and more elevated mind, had he been as much distinguished for higher qualifications as he was for genius and depth of judgment in the art he practised, he would, beyond all doubt, have been without an equal. But there was a certain timidity of mind, a sort of diffidence and want of force in his nature, which rendered it impossible that those evidences of ardour and animation, which are proper to the more exalted character, should ever appear in him; nor did he at any time display one particle of that elevation which, could it but have been added to the advantages wherewith he was endowed, would have rendered him a truly divine painter. . . . At that time there was a most beautiful girl in the Via di San Gallo, who was married to a cap-maker, and who, though born of a poor and vicious father, carried about her as much pride and haughtiness as beauty and fascination. She delighted in trapping the hearts of men, and among others ensnared the unlucky Andrea, whose immoderate love for her soon caused him to neglect the studies demanded by his art, and in great measure to discontinue the assistance which he had given to his parents. Now it chanced that a sudden and grievous illness seized the husband of this woman, who rose no more from his bed, but died thereof. Without

taking counsel of his friends therefore; without regard to the dignity of his art or the consideration due to his genius, and to the eminence he had attained with so much labour; without a word, in short, to any of his kindred, Andrea took this Lucrezia di Baccio del Fede, such was the name of the woman, to be his wife; her beauty appearing to him to merit thus much at his hands, and his love for her having more influence over him than the glory and honour towards which he had begun to make such hopeful advances. But when this news became known in Florence the respect and affection which his friends had previously borne to Andrea changed to contempt and disgust, since it appeared to them that the darkness of this disgrace had obscured for a time all the glory and renown obtained by his talents. But he destroyed his own peace as well as estranged his friends by this act, seeing that he soon became jealous, and found that he had besides fallen into the hands of an artful woman, who made him do as she pleased in all things. He abandoned his own poor father and mother, for example, and adopted the father and sisters of his wife in their stead; insomuch that all who knew the facts mourned over him, and he soon began to be as much avoided as he had previously been sought after." Growing disgusted with himself and the life he was leading, Andrea welcomed an opportunity to go to France. There he received the patronage of the King, François Premier. His work was very much admired and he seemed to be on the point of attaining the eminence which his friends had promised him, when a complaining letter from his wife, Lucrezia, called him back to Florence. "Taking the money which the king confided to him for the purchase of pictures, statues and other fine things, he set off, therefore, having first sworn on the gospels to return in a few months. Arrived happily in Florence, he lived joyously with his wife for some time, making large presents to her father and sisters, but doing nothing for his own parents, whom he would not even see, and who, at the end of a certain period, ended their lives in great poverty and misery."

Vasari tells us that Andrea spent the money entrusted to him by the French King on a house and other luxuries demanded by Lucrezia. There is no historical corroboration of this, but the fact remains that the artist's work ceased to show progress and development. He was stricken by the plague and died on January 22, 1531. at the early age of forty-three.

Rossetti, himself an artist of considerable ability, has this to say in criticism of Andrea's work: "Andrea had true pictorial style, a very high standard of correctness, and an enviable balance of executive endowments. The point of technique in which he excelled least was perhaps that of discriminating the varying textures

of different objects and surfaces. There is not much elevation or ideality in his works—much more of reality.”

Page 146-147. — 5-9. Andrea seeks to bribe Lucrezia to grant him her attention and, if possible, affection even for a few hours. From the opening lines his infatuation is clearly shown.

15. **Fiesole.** A small episcopal city about three miles from Florence. It is set on a hill and looks out on the River Arno.

25. **It saves a model.** “Andrea rarely painted the countenance of a woman in any place that he did not avail himself of the features of his wife; and if at any time he took his model from any other face there was always a resemblance to hers in the painting, not only because he had this woman constantly before him and depicted her so frequently, but also, and what is still more, because he had her lineaments engraven on his heart; it thus happens that almost all his female heads have a certain something which recalls that of his wife.” (Vasari.)

25-27. For a moment Andrea’s artistic sense rises above other feelings.

29. **my moon.** Compare

“Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O, too fond, when have I answered thee?
Ask me no more.”

—(Tennyson, *The Princess*.)

32. **no one’s.** Andrea realizes how indifferent Lucrezia is to the love of other admirers as well as his.

36-38. Twilight seems to Andrea strangely suited to his life, all the ambition and ardent enthusiasm of his youth having burnt out. Lucrezia has lost, he says, any trace of pride she may have had in him, but he—he has lost everything—ambition, courage, hope.

Page 148. — 43. **Holds . . . inside.** Andrea envies the trees their security, protected by the convent garden wall.

57. **cartoon.** Sketch.

Page 149. — 78. **Well, less is more.** The work of these other artists, faulty though it may be in technique, is greater, Andrea says, than his technically flawless paintings.

79-82. They are inspired and work in the glow and enthusiasm of that inspiration. They are artists: he is a mere craftsman, a technician.

93. Morello. A mountain near Florence.

98. All is silver-gray. "Andrea understood the management of light and shade most perfectly, causing the objects depicted to take their due degree of prominence or to retire within the shadows." (Vasari.)

105. The Urbinate. Raphael, born at Urbino, one of the most famous of Italian painters. He painted under the encouragement and patronage of the popes in Rome. Much of his finest work glorifies the walls of the Vatican and the great churches of that city. His paintings are famous for the intensely spiritual appeal they make.

106. George Vasari. Painter and author of the *Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Painters Sculptors and Architects*.

Page 150. — 116. play. Play of emotion.

117. out of me. Beyond me.

130. Agnolo. More commonly called Michael Angelo. He is doubtless the Someone of line 76.

133. All is as God overrules. Note Andrea's tendency to slip back into a sort of fatalistic attitude towards life. Compare lines 49-51.

Page 151. — 142. 'Tis safer for me, . . . This idea is to be found quite frequently in Browning. He held that somehow a man's good fortune must be balanced by misfortune and vice versa. Compare the last stanza of Browning's poem, *The Patriot*.

"Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
'Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
Me?'—God might question; now instead
'Tis God shall repay: I am safer so."

149. Francis. François Premier.

150. Fontainebleau. A royal palace not far from Paris.

162-163. Compare Vasari's note found above on line 25.

Page 152. — 173-176. The great thing was to reach your heart and find a permanent place there. Since I reached it before the triumph of my art, what is lost? Nothing, if I can possess your beauty.

184. Said one day Agnolo. "There is a bit of a manikin in Florence, who, if he chanced to be employed in great undertakings as you have happened to be, would compel you to look well about

you." These words are said to have been spoken by Angelo to Raphael concerning Andrea. (Bocchi, *Beauties of Florence*.)

194. The thought of Angelo's praise gives this timid little man courage for a moment. It is such details as this added to Andrea's portrait that prove Browning's remarkable psychological insight.

199. Lucrezia has asked a question. She has been paying no attention.

203. And you smile indeed. Poor Andrea! It was scarcely likely a smile of gratitude.

Page 153. — 210. The cue-owls. The Scops owl. Its cry is most penetrating—"Ki-ou".

220-222. Lucrezia now reveals the fact that all the while the so-called cousin has been waiting outside, and that she must have money to give him. It is this that has had her attention while Andrea has been trying to win her affection.

Page 154. — 251-256. Andrea's momentary impatience is quite characteristic of a nature as weak as his. Here we have further evidence of Browning's human understanding.

262. Meted. Measured.

263. Leonard. Leonardo da Vinci, a great Renaissance painter, contemporary of Michael Angelo and Raphael.

266. Andrea's infatuation unifies the poem from the first to the last line. In spite of the fact that he realizes that Lucrezia has handicapped him in his work, he prefers to have it so rather than to give her up.

Edward Berdoo in *The Browning Cyclopaedia*, gives the following rather extreme summing up of Andrea's character. Do you agree with it? "Lucrezia, despicable as she was, was not the cause of her husband's failure. His marriage, his treatment of Francis, his allowing his parents to starve, to die of want, while he paid gaming debts for his wife's lover,—all these things tell us what the man was. No woman ruined his soul; he had no soul to ruin!"

PROSPICE

Prospice (Latin, "look forward") was written in the autumn following Mrs. Browning's death, 1861. It was first published in 1864. The poem contains a magnificent statement of the poet's attitude toward Death. When he feels that he is drawing near the

dark hour, he will face it without fear; he wants no one to bandage his eyes; he wishes to bear the full brunt of Death's attack. It is only the last of a series of struggles—the climax of his life. When "the post of the foe" has been passed he will receive "the guerdon" of all life's struggle—union with the soul of his beloved. *Prospice* should be read at the same time as the *Epilogue to 'Asolando'*, which was composed so many years later, when the poet actually was feeling the fog in his throat and the mist in his face and yet was able to hold fast his courageous, daring attitude.

Page 155. — 4. place. The hour of death.

7. the Arch Fear. Death.

11. guerdon. Reward.

17. my peers. My fellows.

19-20. Browning has had so much joy in life, has found it so good, that he will gladly pay now for this fortune with a few moments' struggle and pain.

27. O thou soul of my soul! Mrs. Browning.

THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC

This poem was written in 1878: it bears the date of January 15 of that year. The poem itself is not considered one of Browning's best and is actually very little read. The *Prologue* and *Epilogue*, however, are among the poet's best known lyrics. The idea expressed in each is quite simple—that love has the power to transform the world and give richer and fuller meaning to the artist's work.

The *Prologue* is an excellent example of Browning's concise, elliptical style. The meaning is not always apparent on first reading. The following prose paraphrase may, therefore, be helpful—"Just as a bank of moss seems cold and uninteresting until some May morning it is covered with beautiful blue violets,—just as a cloudy sky is grim and louring until a splendid star breaks through its gloom,—so life may be hemmed in with meanness and disgrace until God's gift of love comes to transform it".

In the *Epilogue* we have a very good illustration of Browning's clever use of the Dramatic Monologue. In it a girl, whose love has been at least partially ignored by a poet, tells a "pretty tale" which has direct bearing upon the situation. The poem is given a very piquant humour by the poet's suggested interruptions and the girl's spirited reactions to them. In the brief compass of the Monologue,

Browning succeeds in giving the reader a most interesting impression of both characters.

Page 156. — 15. (scold me!) The girl anticipates the poet's reproach for forgetfulness.

Page 157. — 45. At this point the poet had interrupted to inform her, with pedantic exactness, how many strings the lyre had.

50. cicada. A kind of cricket.

56. truant. Absent, missing.

Page 158. — 77. his Lotte. Browning here refers to Charlotte Buff who served as the model for the heroine of Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*. Goethe himself was famous for his numerous love affairs.

Page 159. — 89-90. Never more did you find the two apart, the poet whom the cricket had helped to gain a reward and the cricket whom he had thus enthroned upon his statue.

91. Has the poet, with perhaps feigned stupidity, asked what the tale had to do with him?

100-102. The sweet lilt of the cricket's treble supplied the proper contrast with the sombre bass and helped to maintain in the musician's performance a proper balance.

113. atone. Make up for; offset.

115. Apparently the poet has again interrupted as at line 91.

Page 160. — 120. (There, enough!) What action on the part of each character is suggested here?

EPILOGUE TO "ASOLANDO"

Asolando was the name given by Browning to his last volume of poetry which he dedicated to his friend, Mrs. Arthur Bronson, in whose villa at Asolo the poet was residing while he prepared the work for the press. The word is derived from the Italian verb *asolare*, "to disport in the open air, to amuse one's self at random". It is, of course, connected with the name of the village. In his introduction, the poet justified the title to Mrs. Bronson thus: "I use it in love of the place and in requital of your pleasant assurance that an early poem of mine first attracted you thither". The volume was published in London on December 12, 1889, the day of Browning's death in Venice.

The *Epilogue* is one of those poems which brought against Browning the charge of having been intentionally obscure. In it, the poet,

imagining himself dead, deplores the fact that many of those, who had loved him and whom he had loved in return, will think of him in his grave as an object of pity. To do so, sorrowing at his death rather than glorying in his release into immortality, would be to miss the point of his whole life and its teachings. (Cf. *Prospice*.)

3. to where. To the grave.

4. he. The poet, who is thinking of himself as dead.

8. mawkish. Sickly sentimental; lacking manly vigour; insipid.

9. drivel. Act like a fool; talk "twaddle".

10. Was my character not decisive and clear-cut?

15. Sleep in death to wake to immortal life.

17. the unseen. The poet's spirit.

16-20. The poet urges his friends to think of his spirit as being still in the midst of strenuous effort and struggle, those elements in human existence which had been the very essence of his life.

ARNOLD

MATTHEW ARNOLD, the eldest son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby, was born at Laleham on the Thames on December 24, 1822. His early education was received at Winchester. In 1837 he entered Rugby School and from there went up to Baliol College, Oxford. There he distinguished himself as a classical scholar and as a youthful writer. He graduated from the University with honors and, a year later, was elected a fellow of Oriel College. After leaving Oxford he taught at Rugby for a short time and, in 1847, became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, Minister of Education. In 1851 he was appointed inspector of schools, a position which he filled with distinction for thirty-five years. Meanwhile he was writing poetry and had ventured upon his first essay in literary criticism. For ten years (1857-67) Arnold held the post of Professor of Poetry at Oxford. In this position he delivered several of his most celebrated critical essays as lectures. His life was extraordinarily busy and his finest literary work had to be done at night after a day of drudgery. He travelled extensively in England inspecting schools and examining pupils and once (in the winter of 1883-84) came to America where he gave a number of lectures. He died suddenly of a heart attack in 1888, when he was at the very height of his fame and powers.

During his life-time Arnold was influential mostly through his prose, in which he has given the world a body of wise criticism, both literary and social. He insisted upon the necessity of standards in art and conduct. The great concern of his life was to persuade his fellow-men of the urgent need of combating shallow self-satisfaction and fortifying their lives with the wisdom and culture which he found abundantly in the art and philosophy of the Greeks. His poetry is characterized by a simplicity and grace of expression and a symmetry of form which are the practical results of Arnold's study of classical models. It is not and never has been widely popular, but it has enjoyed the favour of a small and discerning group of readers for whom it remains some of the most beautiful verse of the Victorian period.

SHAKESPEARE

In the year 1849 there appeared a volume, *The Strayed Reveller and other Poems*. Three years later came *Empedocles on Etna*. Both were published over the pseudonym "A" and both were quite unsuccessful. Of the *Strayed Reveller*, 500 copies were printed. So few of these were sold that the author, Matthew Arnold, had the work withdrawn from publication. This all seems quite incomprehensible at this distance when we realize that these volumes contained

some of the finest of Arnold's poems and, incidentally, some of the loveliest lyrics of the century.

Page 161. — The *Shakespeare* sonnet was published in the 1849 volume. In it Arnold pays a magnificent tribute to the great dramatist. He speaks of the sublimity of Shakespeare which has made him tower, like some high mountain peak, above humanity. Having sounded all the depths of human experience, he has given the fullest and truest utterance to the joys and sorrows of mankind, and yet, despite all the attempts of critics and biographers to account for his genius, he has remained and will remain a great mystery. He has not worn his "heart on his sleeve",—he has not revealed himself. One is reminded of Wordsworth's description of Milton—
"Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart".

The *Sonnet* shows a combination of the Italian and Shakespearian forms. The rhyming scheme of the octave is Petrarchan (a b b a, a c c a), while the sestet is Shakespearian, save that the concluding couplet is not as epigrammatic as is usually the case in Shakespeare's sonnets.

1. others. Other writers.

abide. Submit to and, in some sense, answer. "Other writers submit to the questioning of critics and reveal something of their character, but you pay no heed to our attempts to explain you."

4-8. Matthew Arnold here employs one of his most expressive analogies.

8. foil'd. Defeated and, hence, vain.

mortality. Mortal men.

10. This line is not as strong poetically as the rest of the Sonnet. The description of Shakespeare which it contains is not, in the light of recent investigation, quite true. It was however, the popular conception of the dramatist during the early part of the 19th Century.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

This poem also was published in the 1849 volume. With the utmost deftness it suggests the intriguing story of the forsaken merman and his children and the poor wistful Margaret whose soul must ever be torn between love of the

"Cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair"—

and loyalty to her kinsfolk who "pray in the little grey church on the shore" and save their souls. The story is unfolded to an accompaniment of exquisite verse music and against a background of very quiet but lovely pictures of nature.

One feels that Francis Bickley's statement is singularly apt:—"It seems incredible that such siren-music should have fallen on deaf ears. A society properly apprehensive of beauty would have been all agog to know who was this clear-voiced singer masquerading behind the first letter of the alphabet." (*Matthew Arnold and his Poetry.*)

6. the wild white horses. The foaming breakers.

Page 162. — 11. Notice the sense of hesitancy, of waiting that is suggested by the recurrent short line. (Cf. lines 12, 19, 22, etc.)

15. (Call once more.) This parenthetical expression produces the same effect as that noted for line 11. (Compare line 49.)

Page 163. — 54. sound of a far-off bell. Bringing with it a reminder of life in the world of men and filling the heart of Margaret with homesick yearning for her kinsfolk.

59. I lose my poor soul. An old superstition, still alive in out-of-the-way places, is that no such creatures as fairies or mermen may ever taste the joys of heaven.

Page 164. — 82-85. One feels in these lines the eddying swirl of the sea currents.

97. the whizzing wheel stands still. The thought of the ocean and of her sea children has come to Margaret and, for the moment, stolen her heart away. Notice the alliteration and onomatopœia in this line.

Page 165. — 110. Originally this line read,—
"The salt-tide rolls seaward".

Page 166. — 140-143. The simplicity and quiet beauty of these concluding lines fill the reader's mind with a sense of loneliness and pity more poignant than would have been evoked by a less restrained and more passionate utterance.

RUGBY CHAPEL

This poem was published in 1867. It has about it a dignity and an austere, simple beauty which make it one of the greatest *elegies* in our Literature. It was written in memory of one of the really great personalities of the 19th Century, Dr. Thomas Arnold, the

famous headmaster of Rugby. When he was appointed to this office in 1828, the "Doctor" had a challenging task awaiting him in the regenerating of the school. This he accomplished and, by his tact and firmness, made himself loved and respected, not only at Rugby but throughout England. Indeed he is remembered today as one of the noblest of English headmasters. He died suddenly in 1842 and was buried in the Chapel of his beloved school. Fifteen years later, his distinguished son, looking out over the playing fields of Rugby as the dark of a bleak, cold autumn evening descended, was inspired to compose in honour of the great personality of his father which he still felt brooding over the school, and which, as he remembered it, had known no change with the "revolving" seasons, but had remained cheerful and courageous through all the vicissitudes of life.

1-13. Notice the simple dignity of these opening lines. They at once establish the mood of restrained emotion which pervades the whole composition. The quiet, lonely autumn landscape is in harmony with the poet's pensive mood, tinged with sadness.

2. **The field.** The famous playing fields where the game of Rugby football was originated and developed.

16. *gloom.* Arnold had a rather annoying habit of using italics in his verse.

Page 167. — 29-30. Dr. Arnold died on June 12, 1842, from an attack of *angina-pectoris*.

38-39. The poet cannot conceive of the mighty energy which he remembered in his father ceasing or remaining in a state of inactivity.

49-51. There was in the Doctor this combination of firmness (almost severity) and kindness.

Page 168. — 58-72. Matthew Arnold viewed human nature with few or no illusions. He saw clearly that the lives of many men are made ineffective and almost futile by the fact that there is in their existence little central control, co-ordination or plan. Life is for such a rather meaningless whirl which ends without making much real difference to the world.

68-72. Note again the simple beauty of the poet's diction.

Page 169. — 84 ff. Arnold frequently employed sustained analogies and often, as here, with great success.

110-112. The figure is a little obscure here. It indicates Death.

Page 170. — 145 ff. Dr. Arnold's character was so sincere and honest that his son was able, through him, to believe in the great souls of whom history, sacred and profane, brings us the records. If it had not been for the compelling argument of his father's life and character, he might have been tempted to take a cynical attitude and think of such stories as mere myths, for he found very little in the lives of those around him to indicate the possibility of the appearance of such noble natures.

Page 171. — 154. ff. Arnold made a very keen and searching criticism of Society. He deplored the lack of culture and spirituality which he found among people. He was conscious of the dangers and weaknesses of Democracy and looked to the "golden" few, who had cultivated the power of self-control and balance in life and were gifted for leadership, to save the world from the stupidity and gross Philistinism of the "many". (Compare below lines 172-174 and 188 ff.)

DOVER BEACH

Dover Beach was first published in 1867 in the volume, *New Poems*. As a motto for the volume, Arnold chose the following four lines:

"Though the Muse be gone away,
Though she move not earth today,
Souls, ere-while who caught her word,
Ah! still harp on what they heard."

As the lines suggest, most of the poetry in the volume is retrospective and intensely personal.

Page 173. — 3. light. From some beacon or light-house.

4. the cliffs. The famous white cliffs of Dover.

8. moon-blanch'd land. A fine picturesque phrase.

9-14. The movement of these lines suggests very skilfully the long withdrawing motion, alternating with the swifter forward rush of the waves.

14. To the poet's sensitively attuned ear there rises through the calm beauty of Nature an unmistakable note of sadness. Sophocles heard it and it brought into his mind the thought of human misery. Wordsworth heard it as

"The still, sad music of humanity
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue."

15. **Sophocles.** One of the greatest of Greek tragic poets.

21-23. Arnold had an intense love of the past. He deplored the tendency of many modern thinkers to turn their backs upon the achievements of ancient civilisations in art and philosophy.

24-28. The despondency expressed in these lines is not unusual in Arnold's work. As a boy he was brought up in a home where he was taught a simple and devout faith. When he went to College he found himself in an atmosphere of doubt and scepticism. We are often conscious in his poetry of the conflict which arose in the poet's mind as he honestly and reverently strove to find some answer to religious questionings.

Note the moving simplicity of the poet's style in these lines. Their beauty makes a very strong and direct appeal.

28. **shingles.** Beaches acted upon by the motion of the tides.

Page 174. — 35. **darkling.** Dim.

36-37. Compare the note on lines 24-28 above. The deep dejection of the poet's attitude is relieved by his appeal to what he feels to be fine and strong in man's character. He turns to human love and loyalty, hoping that there his spirit may find a refuge from the confused and whirling struggle of life—"Let us be true to one another."

THE FUTURE

First published in 1852 with the following significant motto—

"For nature hath long kept this inn, the Earth
And many a guest hath she therein received."

The poem is a fine sustained analogy, in which time is likened to a river upon whose stream man is borne ever onward. Vainly he attempts to form any complete idea of the vast country through which he is carried. At best he can do little more than gain some fragmentary knowledge of those sections of the river's banks which he passes in his brief journey.

7-18. Arnold here describes the power of environment.

Page 175. — 21. ff. Vainly does man seek to know fully the life of ages before him or to foresee the future which awaits the world.

25. **wots of.** Understands.

27-49. Again we see Arnold's love of the past which led him often to idealize it. He often speaks of the present scornfully as in *The Scholar Gipsy*—

“This strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided mind.”

36. ff. For the story of **Rebekah**, read *Genesis*, XXIV, 15 ff.

42. **deem**. Form judgment, judge. (From Anglo Saxon **deman**—to judge. Compare Manx, *deemster*—a judge.)

45-46. For the story of **Moses'** call to lead his people, read *Exodus*, III and IV.

Page 176. — 50. This tract. Arnold's own period.

53 ff. The poet here refers to the great increase of commerce and industry which led to the building of great ugly cities in England. All this seems inimical to the best in life. Will man ever again know the peace and order which he experienced in earlier times? Who knows? We cannot be certain of the past and who will be so rash as to foretell the future? Perhaps man will again find peace, a different peace, but one which will bring to the voyager on the river of Time—

“murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.”

SWINBURNE

*Death is not fighting
antagonistic*

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE, eldest son of Admiral Swinburne and Lady Jane, daughter of the 3rd Earl of Ashburnham, was born in London, April 5, 1837. The boy spent his summers in Northumberland and his winters in the Isle of Wight where the family held beautiful estates. Here he acquired that knowledge and love of Nature, particularly the Sea, which is so beautiful and important an element in his poetry. He was educated at Eton and, later, at Baliol College, Oxford, where it is said he knew more Greek than his tutors. He left the University without taking a degree, and settled in London. His first great poetic work, *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), captivated a wide circle of readers. In the next year his volume of *Poems and Ballads* offended the British public which, to quote Macaulay, was having "one of its periodical fits of morality". The poet was attacked most violently for the pagan attitude which he took towards nature, looking upon it as a force hostile to man, and his unorthodox views in religion. Few men of letters have so completely dedicated themselves to Literature. Owing partly to his deafness, but largely to his concentration upon his work, the poet lived in almost complete retirement at Putney on the Thames with his friend, the poet and critic, Theodore Watts-Dunton. When Tennyson died in 1892 Swinburne was recognized as the greatest living English poet. It was generally expected that he would be appointed Poet-laureate, but Queen Victoria had not forgotten his early views on religion and could not overlook his rather radical political utterances. Swinburne died in 1909, the last in order of time of the great Victorians, and was buried in the Isle of Wight.

THE FORSAKEN GARDEN

"A reed through whom all things blow into music",—thus Tennyson aptly described Swinburne to whom George Meredith referred as "our greatest lyric poet". The reader must never lose sight of this fact, that Swinburne was, above everything else, a singer. For him the first and greatest consideration was always the musical effect of his verse. He was even at times willing to sacrifice sense to sound and is accused by some critics of having gone too far in his development of the purely melodic side of poetry.

All this is very well exemplified in *The Forsaken Garden* which, melancholy though it may be, is yet a piece of exquisite verse music. The reader will be interested to note the devices which Swinburne employs,—alliteration, varied vowel harmonies, etc. He may be

reminded, as he reads, of the flowery elaborations and embellishments which form so striking an element in the music of Chopin. One delights in them for a time, but the appetite may soon "sicken and so die" and the listener turn with relief and fresh pleasure to the wholesome bread of Beethoven.

Page 178. — 1. *coign*. Corner, nook. (French, *le coin*.)

4. Note the alliterations in this line.

7. Note the alliteration employed here, also the varied vowel sounds, *grew green from the graves*. Compare line 10 and line 23.

8. Notice the deliberate use of this short line with its three equally stressed syllables at the end of each stanza. Notice, also, that very frequently the last word of the preceding line (15, 23, etc.) is important and must be pronounced rather deliberately. What is the total effect upon the reader?

9. *abrupt and broken*. An onomatopoetic phrase.

19. *strait*. Narrow, confined.

rifled. Plundered, ravaged.

Page 179. — 27-28. The poet is here doubtless thinking of the ancient legend of the nightingale that wooed a rose.

30. *a sea-bird's song*. The cry of sea-birds is often employed to heighten the sense of desolation in a landscape.

33. *dishevels*. Makes ragged; tears.

38. *Haply*. Perhaps.

38. ff. The poet now seeks to reconstruct in his imagination the story of human emotion which this garden may have known. Perhaps it was the rendezvous of lovers who, in spite of their vows, proved untrue. Perhaps those who looked out from this garden to the sea were faithful until death parted them. But now, what difference? Lovers and love itself now share the fate of the garden and its roses—they have not survived the assault of grim death. The reader will be interested to compare this melancholy view of life and human devotion with that expressed in Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel* or Shakespeare's *Sonnets*.

43-44. The rose will shed its beauty and die,—so will the loves of some men prove insecure and fleeting. Not so ours—our affection will live on true and loyal, just as the foaming waves of the sea outlast the gay flowers of these garden plots.

Page 180. — 57. *are at one*. Are in similar plight.

63. *as they . . . laughter*. As those that are dead.

76. *lessen*. Are worn away.

78. *spoils*. Those things that Death has broken and "rifled".

ROSSETTI

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI, the son of a distinguished Italian scholar and painter living in exile in England, was born in London in 1828. The boy studied painting and early showed a great deal of promise. His interest in the Middle Ages and the individuality of his style in painting attracted around him a group of young and enthusiastic artists who formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Rossetti early attracted attention through his poetry by the success of his first long poem, *The Blessed Damozel*, and the romantic circumstances which surrounded the publication of his collected poems in 1870. These poems had been buried in the coffin with Rossetti's young wife in 1862. Only after the most persistent demands of his friends were they exhumed and published. Following his wife's death in 1862, Rossetti lived with little interruption a quiet, secluded life in the retirement of his beautiful old house in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. He died at Birchington-on-Sea, on Easter Day, 1882.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

This poem was written by Rossetti when he was but nineteen years of age. Concerning the idea which is its central theme, the poet himself said: "I saw that Poe in *The Raven* had done the utmost it was possible to do with the grief of the lover on earth, and I determined to reverse the conditions and give utterance to the yearning of the loved one in heaven". This "yearning" of the lonely maiden, surrounded though she may be by all the joys of Paradise, is made vivid for us in a series of pictures, the colour and detail of which mark Rossetti as the Pre-Raphaelite painter as surely as any of his canvases. The poem is published in several versions. It will be of interest and profit to the reader to compare that published here with the version chosen for the *Oxford Book of English Verse*.

Page 181. — 1. ff. Notice the exact details employed by Rossetti — the gold bar of heaven, the three lilies, the seven stars, her hair "yellow like ripe corn". It is the painter rather than the poet who holds our attention here.

Rossetti and a group of his artist friends were very much interested in the paintings of the mediaeval artists, those masters who lived before the Renaissance and whose work was done before Raphael's influence had become all-powerful. They found them "simple,

sincere and religious" and sought to recapture in their own work something of their naïve freshness. These painters are now known as the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. As has been remarked above, Rossetti carried his feeling for painting over into his poetry. Many of the descriptions in *The Blessed Damozel* might be transferred from his canvases or those of his friend, Holman Hunt.

1. damozel. The choice of this and other archaic words in the poem provides further evidence of Rossetti's interest in the past.

9. Mary. The Virgin.

13. Her seemed. It seemed to her. (Compare the Archaic form, "methinks").

17. Albeit. Even though. (Archaic expression).

19-24. The lines printed in parenthesis give the reader the poet's personal emotion, his reaction to the vision of his beloved. Here, for instance, he seems to feel her hair brush his cheek, but in a moment awakens to reality and perceives that it is nothing but the falling autumn leaves.

Page 182. — 36. midge. A small fly, a gnat.

42. This giving of a body and form to the abstract and immaterial is quite characteristic of Rossetti.

55-56. The description of the moon floating so far below her that it is like a curled white feather is highly imaginative.

Page 183. — 73. aureole. Halo of light.

80. Occult. Hidden.

Page 184. — 87. the Dove. The Holy Spirit. (Compare the imagery of these lines with that in the first three stanzas of Humbert Wolfe's beautiful lyric *The Nun I*, in *Requiem*.)

99-102. The lover doubts whether he who is so little worthy of the bliss of heaven can ever again be united with the Damozel.

109-114. A purely pictorial effect.

113-114. for them who are just born, being dead. For those souls who have just entered eternal life through the gateway of death.

Page 185. — 121-126. Another picture.

126. citherns and citoles. Mediaeval stringed instruments played by plucking with a plectrum or with the finger.

139-144. The pathos of the loneliness of both the Damozel and her lover is made all the more poignant by the brief parenthetical expressions.

HENLEY

Death is end
" is what
content

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY was born in 1849 at Gloucester. He was educated at the Crypt Grammar School, where he had the good fortune to have as headmaster Rev. T. E. Brown, the celebrated Manx poet. From an early age he suffered from a tuberculous disease, spending much of his time in hospitals. One foot was amputated when he was twenty years of age. As early as 1874 he was sending verses to the Cornhill Magazine, describing in a quite new and intimate way the life of a hospital. These attracted the very favourable attention of the editor, Leslie Stephen, who brought Robert Louis Stevenson to see the young poet in an Edinburgh hospital. From this visit, there was to result for both writers a friendship of a most fruitful character. In 1877, Henley was well enough to go to London where he established himself as a journalist, poet and critic. He and Robert Louis Stevenson collaborated in writing four plays, two of which enjoyed English and American successes on the stage. When he died in 1903, Henley was mourned by a large group of writers to whom he had been virtually a leader.

Henley's poetry, which is characterised by great care and beauty of workmanship, is noteworthy for the spirit of courage which the reader sees in it triumphing over physical weakness and pain.

MARGARITAE SORORI

This poem, dedicated to Henley's sister Margaret, is a really lovely evening meditation. The poet, who has known so much torture and pain, longs for a passing as quiet as the peaceful fall of evening, when, with his work done and some quiet joy still glowing in his mind, he "puts out to sea". As a companion piece for this, read Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*.

Page 186. — 5. the old, gray city. London.

5-10. The poet's description reminds one of a painting of Turner.

15-16. Two lovely lines. They are full of meaning, arising as they do out of the real experience of the poet.

20. The lark is a symbol of joy.

MEREDITH

GEORGE MEREDITH was born at Portsmouth, Hampshire, in 1828, the only child of a Welsh father and an Irish mother.

His father inherited a prosperous tailoring business, but was entirely incompetent to manage it and abandoned both it and his son. The boy, whose mother died when he was five years old, was cared for by relatives. At the age of fourteen he was sent to the Moravian School at Neuwied, Germany, where his formal education was completed. He was then articled to a London solicitor, but gave this up and devoted himself entirely to writing. He had a very hard struggle, experiencing more than the usual amount of poverty and privation. In his capacity as journalist and reviewer he was able to give assistance and encouragement to many young, struggling writers, notably to Thomas Hardy. In 1849, he married but was extremely unhappy. The result was, after nine years, a separation. Three years after the death of his first wife, he married again, this time entirely happily. Meredith's life was one of quiet unremitting toil. He gained public attention very slowly. In 1905 he received the Order of Merit and, four years later, died. A memorial service was held for him in Westminster Abbey. Hearing of his death, Hardy wrote:

"No matter. Further and further still
Through the world's vaporous vitiate air
His words wing on—as live words will."

During his life time it was his novels that brought Meredith the greatest notice, whereas today his verse is coming to bulk larger and larger in the estimation of readers. Like Hardy, he was a moralist, concerned chiefly with man and his struggle for existence.

"WOODLAND PEACE" AND "DIRGE IN WOODS"

In one of his late novels, *Lord Ormont and his Aminta*, Meredith wrote—"We do not get to any heaven by renouncing the mother we spring from; and when there is an eternal secret for us, it is best to believe that Earth knows it, to keep near her, even in our utmost aspirations".

Such was the creed that George Meredith constantly reaffirmed. Earth is our Mother. We cannot sever ourselves from her without the danger of incurring pain and sorrow. Man, if he is wise, will live close to her and, when the hour of his great change comes, will quietly without question or complaint return to her. These are the central ideas of the two poems, *Woodland Peace* and *Dirge in Woods*. Both poems appeared in 1870 in *A Reading of Earth*.

Page 187. — 3. The creatures of Nature who live close to the Earth in the woodland have never lost the happiness of Eden. Only those who have forgotten the union of all things through nature have lost the joy of life. Compare T. E. Brown's poem, *Sweet Breeze*—

“do ye not understand
How the great Mother mixes all our bloods?”

7. all. All the creatures of nature—animals, birds, plants.

11. wot. have knowledge of.

12. The creatures of the woodland are not blind to the strife and conflict which go on around them.

13-14. If existence is involved and difficult to understand they do not grow impatient; they do not insist upon an answer to every question; they realize that there must be much mystery in life.

DIRGE IN WOODS

Page 188. — This exquisite lyric is a quiet reflection concerning Death which should come as naturally, after the wild race of life, as the falling of fruit from the tree.

The reader must note the fine contrast contained in the poem. It is brought out by the form of the poem. (Compare 9, 10, 11 with the remaining four lines). It is also emphasised by a double set of images—the tree-tops swaying in the breeze contrasted with the quiet floor of the forest, the rushing of wind-driven clouds compared with the quiet dropping of the mature pine cones.

fatalist
pessimist
tolerance
frank

THOMAS HARDY

"Strange lovers, man and earth! their love and hate
Braided in mutual need; and of their strife
A tired contentment born."

—VITA SACKVILLE-WEST, "*The Land*"

THOMAS HARDY, in many respects the most interesting and commanding figure in modern English Literature, was born in Upper Bockhampton, near Dorchester on June 2, 1840. He was educated in the Dorchester schools and, later, at King's College, London. He studied ecclesiastical architecture under John Hicks for five years from 1856-61. He became assistant to the late Sir Arthur Blomfield, R.A., in 1862, and, in carrying out his duties, worked in many of the oldest churches in England. In 1863 he won the prize and medal offered by the Royal Institute of British Architects for an essay and, in the same year, Sir William Tite's prize for architectural design. All this while he had been reading and studying, particularly in the classics, and had cherished an ambition to write. As early as 1865 he was writing a good deal of verse. The young man was at this time undecided whether to follow literature or architecture as a profession. In 1872 appeared the first of his really great works, *Under the Greenwood Tree*. Two years later he experienced his first popular success with *Far from the Madding Crowd*, which was published anonymously in the *Cornhill Magazine* and was by many critics attributed to George Eliot. Following this success Hardy wrote and published over a dozen novels, the masterpiece among which is usually conceded to be *The Return of the Native* with its grim depiction of Egdon Heath. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) had a very large circulation and gave rise to very violent and bitter discussion. Hardy was attacked for the frankness with which he spoke of human problems and human relationships. In *Jude the Obscure* (1895) Hardy went even further in the same direction. The book was so bitterly attacked in the press and from the pulpit, that Hardy became disgusted and determined to write no more novels. Great as the loss may have been to prose fiction, it was clear gain for poetry, to which he now returned. From the beginning of the century until his death in 1929 Hardy published several volumes of lyrics and his great epic drama of the Napoleonic era, *The Dynasts*.

In all his work, whether prose or poetry, Hardy is concerned with one thing supremely, and that is the principle of life, whether revealed in nature or in man. He has been called a pessimist and a fatalist. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that he looks at life with unflinching frankness and sees clearly the often painful and always absorbing struggle of man for existence.

“ WHEN I SET OUT FOR LYONNESSE ”

This beautiful lyric was first published in the volume, *Satires of Circumstance*. The poem is full of bewitching music and has about it a magical beauty which appeals at once to the reader's imagination. Very little is told directly, but much is suggested and the reader's mind is opened upon vistas of vague beauty, both of sound and thought.

Page 189. — 1. *Lyonnesse*. The mythical realm of King Arthur. The very name is rich in association, standing as it does for romance and bringing to one's mind memories of the jousting of knights, the perils of beautiful maidens, the fellowship of the Round Table, Lancelot, Guinevere and the blameless King, the song-built walls of Camelot and, surrounding it all, the magic of Merlin.

3. *rime*. Hoar-frost.

4. Note the beauty of this line. In it Hardy employs rich and varied vowel harmony and alliteration. Notice that this is true of the corresponding line of each stanza.

5-6. The repetition of the first two lines of each stanza as a refrain gives a fine musical lilt to the composition.

7. *bechance*. Happen.

15. *mute surmise*. A guess which could find no expression in words.

THE SOULS OF THE SLAIN

First published in the section of *War Poems* in the volume *Poems of the Past and Present*. Although not wholly relevant here, Hardy's introduction to this volume is of interest in forming an accurate appreciation of the poet's view of poetry and its relation to life. He says in the course of his "Preface"—"It (the volume) will probably be found to possess little cohesion of thought or harmony of colouring. I do not greatly regret this. Unadjusted impressions have their value, and the road to a true philosophy of life seems to be in humbly recording diverse readings of its phenomena as they are forced upon us by chance and change."

The theme of the poem was suggested by the Boer War. In an interesting article, *Two Readings of Earth*, contributed to *The Yale Review* (April, 1926) Professor John Livingstone Lowes made the following statement which has particular bearing upon the poem in question—

"But the earth is to Hardy a haunted spot in a far more intimate, personal way. I know no poetry so pervaded as his with a sense of the continued presence of the dead, nor is there another body of verse in the world, I think, in which that sense is conveyed to us with such intolerable poignancy and beauty. . . . No one but Hardy could have written the passing strange and moving lines in which the souls of the men of Wessex slain in the Boer war come home to the ancient promontory on which ghosts have walked since the Stone Age."

3. **Race.** "The turbulent sea area off the Bill of Portland, where contrary tides meet." (Hardy's note).

Page 190 — 4. Hardy often employs such broad, bold strokes in sketching in the natural settings of his poems.

10. **bent-bearded slope.** The slope which is covered (bearded) with bent-grass.

14. Note the onomatopoetic effect in this line and the next—
"A whirr, as of wings waved".

15. **mighty-vanned.** With large wings. For this meaning of "van", which is a local expression, compare the *Eternal Chorus of Intelligences* in the *Forescene* to Hardy's great dramatic poem *The Dynasts*—

"We'll close up Time as a bird its *van*".

19. **bore to.** Headed for; went in the direction of.

21. **without mould.** Bodiless; shapeless.

23. **turreted lantern.** The lighthouse or, more correctly, the high tower of the lighthouse.

24. **main.** Ocean.

27. **nether bord.** Lower side, southern hemisphere (here South Africa).

28. **Capricorn.** One of the most conspicuous constellations in the Southern heavens.

Page 191. — 32. **senior soul-flame.** This is possibly a reference to General Wauchope, a gallant officer, who was killed during the Boer War.

33. **Of the like filmy hue.** As indistinct and shadowy as the other "souls of the slain".

Page 192. — 57-59. Some of your sweethearts find that mourning clothes do not take away from their attractiveness.

prink them. dress themselves.

69. **homely.** Humble, commonplace.

73-75. Some of the souls ask bitterly whether it was worth while leaving the grave to gain such information as they have received.

Page 193. — 93. **Pentecost Wind.** See *The Acts of the Apostles*, Chapter 2, verses 1 and 2.

94. **thinned.** Grew faint.

95. **surceased.** Ceased; died away. Compare Shakespeare's use of the noun, **surcease** in *Macbeth*, I, 7, 4.

LIFE LAUGHS ONWARD

Published in *Moments of Vision*. In this poem Hardy expresses the mood which so often rises in the minds of the middle-aged or the old when they find that the "younger generation" seems to care nothing for or to have forgotten what has gone before. For a moment the poet is tempted to resent this apparently callous attitude but his mood changes as, with characteristic tolerance, he realizes that, after all, it represents one of the unalterable laws of Life and Progress that the world goes on gaily from achievement to achievement, often forgetting what is behind.

Page 194. — 5. **where.** To the grave.

6. **riven.** Torn apart.

IN TIME OF "THE BREAKING OF NATIONS"

In Time of "The Breaking of Nations" was first published in the section of *Poems of War and Patriotism* in the volume, *Moments of Vision*. The title of his lyric was suggested, Hardy says in a note, by a passage in *Jeremiah*, LI, 20.

In these three stanzas Hardy has expressed briefly his profound conviction that the fundamental processes of life,—tilling the soil, clearing the land and thus extending the bounds of civilisation, the love of a "man for a maid"—are strong and will abide, outliving the apparently important but really trivial incidents of history, such as wars and dynastic rivalry.

9. **wight.** Man. Hardy has intentionally chosen a local term, one of the very old words in our speech. It is derived from Anglo-Saxon *wiht*, the simplest term for a man.

11. **cloud.** Some editions of the poem read "fade".

W. B. YEATS

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS, one of the most interesting figures in the group of modern Irish poets, was born in Dublin, June 13, 1865. His father, John Butler Yeats, was an artist and, for some three years, the son studied art. He gave it up, however, at the age of twenty-one, and devoted himself whole-heartedly to Literature, to which he has made a conspicuous contribution through his association with the Movement which has come to be known as the Irish Renaissance. During the last two decades of the 19th Century, a number of young and enthusiastic Irish writers set before themselves the ideal of discovering and preserving all that was finest in the native art of Ireland. They sought, to quote Yeats' own words, to go "below all that is individual, modern and restless, seeking foundations for an Ireland that can only come into existence in a Europe that is still a dream". From the first, two of the most influential members of the Movement were Yeats and Lady Gregory. Together, they founded the Irish National Theatre, which later developed into the Abbey Theatre. They were assisted by some of the outstanding Irish writers of the day, notably by Synge, the dramatist, James Stephens and Padraic Colum.

Much of Yeats' first work was dramatic, his plays being founded on old Celtic traditions and folk-lore. His name, even now, is greater, however, as a lyric poet, and it is as this that the world will remember him longest. In 1922, he became a Senator of the Irish Free State, a position which he has held ever since. In 1923, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. The reader will find great interest in an essay, *The Bounty of Sweden* (The Dial, Sept., 1924), in which he talks of himself and describes, in his whimsical way, his experiences in Sweden on the occasion of his being presented with the Nobel Prize by the Swedish King. One paragraph in this essay is so illuminating that it will bear quotation here:

"Every now and then, when something has stirred my imagination, I begin talking to myself. I speak in my own person and dramatize myself, very much as I have seen mad, old women do upon the Dublin quays . . . Occasionally, I write out what I have said in verse, and generally for no better reason than because I remember that I have written no verse for a long time. I do not think of my soliloquies as having different literary qualities. They stir my interest by their appropriateness to the man I imagine myself to be, or by their accurate description of some emotional circumstance, more than by any aesthetic value."

Making the usual allowance for the play of poetic imagination, one cannot help feeling that Yeats has very clearly described his method of composition in the above lines. There is in all his lyrical

poetry, the spontaneous quality which marks it as having arisen out of the very heart of the man. It is tinged with the colour of his nationality, with the beauty of the environment in which he has lived, with the whimsical pathos and delicate humour which are part and parcel of the Celtic temperament. Both the lyrics included in this volume belong to his early period as a poet.

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

Few qualities are more characteristic of the Celtic temperament than love of home or of a particular locality which, for some special reason, speaks to the heart. This mood is given very appealing expression in Yeats' charming lyric. The poet, penned up in a city, is homesick. He hears in his imagination the insistent call of Innisfree—the cool lapping of its waves fills his heart with yearning as he stands in the gray city streets.

As a companion piece for this, read Moira O'Neill's *Corrymeela*. The same emotion fills the touching lines of Robert Louis Stevenson, —*To S. R. Crockett*.

AEDH WISHES FOR THE CLOTHS OF HEAVEN

This brief lyric is distinguished by the beauty and freshness of its imagery. It is full of the whimsical "stuff" from which Celtic fairy tales are made. The skies are cloths richly embroidered with dim silver or bright golden stars. The poor lover's dreams are his only possession. He will lay them as a gift at his lady's feet.

menecan

leg. linder

PADRAIC COLUM

PADRAIC COLUM was born in Longford, Ireland, on Dec. 8, 1881. He was brought up in counties Longford and Cavan where he became firmly grounded in Irish song and folk-lore and all the native culture of the Irish people. It is not surprising, therefore, that, when he decided to devote his life to writing, he was attracted to the Irish Renaissance group. He supported Yeats and Lady Gregory in the National Theatre Movement, his plays being among the first produced in the Dublin Theatre. He has now been living for some years in the United States of America. In 1923, he was invited by the Hawaiian Legislature to make a survey of the native myths and folk-lore of the islands with a view to making them available in attractive form for the Hawaiian children. To this end, he spent several months in Hawaii and published the results of his investigations in a series of charming tales for children.

Colum's poetry, particularly his earlier work, deals with the humble life of the Irish poor. It is full of local colour and reflects a very sincere love of all those homely details and aspects of life which have enshrined Erin in so many hearts.

AN OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS

Colum has said, giving advice to poets—"Remember, if your poem is to be a short one, that the poem is in the first line . . .

'She walks in beauty like the night.'

Everything is said in that first line and what follows only holds up the mood that that first line has evoked."

Whether the generalisation is just need not concern us here. The reader must, however, realize that Colum's own poem is an excellent illustration of his rule. The first line does utter simply the whole theme which is merely elaborated and expanded in the remainder of the poem. The whole composition is given an added charm by the appealing Irish lilt which one feels in its quaint idiom.

Page 196. — 2. the hearth and stool. All the things mentioned in the lyric to indicate the longing of the old woman are chosen to add the special Irish local colour which Colum wishes, but they are such things as hold the love and call forth the care of women everywhere and at all times. Hence, the appeal which the poem makes is not restricted to one locality or any special time.

7. delph. Usually spelt *delf* or more correctly *delft*. A special kind of glazed pottery made first at Delft in Holland in the 14th

Century. Later, the term was applied to glazed pottery of many kinds, especially to the English and Irish varieties which were made in imitation of the original Dutch ware.

17. Och! but I'm weary. The idiom is specifically Irish.

HODGSON

RALPH HODGSON is so much a recluse by habit and has so successfully avoided the glare of publicity that the date and place of his birth are difficult to establish. This is perhaps not the smallest of the poet's achievements. Writing in 1918 in "The Bookman", William Lyon Phelps said: "Ralph Hodgson was born somewhere in Northumberland about forty years ago". Manly and Rickert ("Contemporary British Literature") are responsible for the statement that he was "born in Yorkshire, 1872". These two statements serve to place the poet well enough in temporal relation to his contemporaries. We are told that he has lived in America, that he has worked as a journalist, that he has done much to encourage the publication of verse through his association with the Poetry Bookshop in London and, most interesting perhaps of all, that he is a leading authority in the British Isles on bull-terriers. Indeed, his favourite companions are said to be Wordsworth, Shelley and a bull-terrier. What order of precedence they take in his affection is not recorded.

Aside from his gift of lyric expression, the most interesting fact about Hodgson is the original attitude he takes towards the world about him. He finds an interest in all created things. He sees beauty and dignity in animals and birds and deplores the indifference and disregard with which human beings treat them. Indeed, he often expresses, and not infrequently with a good deal of passion, his scorn of man, who, with his pettiness, his selfishness and cruelty, seems to Hodgson to cut a poor figure in comparison with the lower animals.

THE SONG OF HONOUR

This poem is a magnificent modern expansion of the 148th Psalm. As the poet stands upon a hill top in the evening, he hears in imagination all creation join in a hymn of praise to the Creator of the universe—man, bird, beast and even inanimate nature, the hills, the trees, etc.

Page 197. — 13-14. To show you how still the valleys were, I could hear a watch-dog miles away.

Page 198. — 29-33. The lines in italics represent a suggested explanation of the sounds which the poet imagines he hears. Compare the use of parenthesis in *The Blessed Damozel*.

34-36. It was winter and the wren and nightingale were still in the warm clime to which they had migrated.

Page 199. — 68. limn. Sketch or paint.

69. men divinely wise. Artists who see nature with more than the physical eye. For such it has a spiritual value perceived by means of the artistic imagination.

73. shiny pleiades. The Pleiades are a group of stars. Greek mythology says that they were the seven daughters of Atlas and Pleione. They lived as nymphs in the woodland devoting themselves to the worship of Diana. One day they were pursued by Orion. They prayed to the gods for aid and were converted first into a flock of milk-white doves and, later, into stars. At the time of the fall of Troy, one of the Pleiades was so overcome with grief that she pined away and is ever since all but invisible among her sisters.

Greek mythology is full of such charming legends in which the Greeks invested the objects of Nature with personality and spiritual significance.

87-91. Compare Masefield's *A Consecration*.

Page 200. — 99-105. The song of brave workers who, in meeting the difficulties of life every day, reveal as great a degree of courage as is exhibited by sailors or soldiers.

113. ff. The song of lovers who, on the perception of some new beauty in their beloved or at a glance from her eyes, a blush or a tremulous sigh, forget time and place and are carried into a very heaven of delight.

114. Twitched up. Transported.

Page 201. — 123. Love of children for their parents.

127-8. Loyal patriots.

130-133. The song of those who take the broader international view.

142. lonely hearths. Homes where bereavement has entered.

146. a Darkness. The shadow of Death.

148. ff. The song of preachers and ministers of the Gospel who bring comfort to the bereaved and courage to the dying.

Page 203. — 194. their lyric might. Their song of praise.

203-204. The poet who has remained silent in awe and wonder now feels compelled to join in the general hymn of adoration.

212-215. Hodgson leaves the reader at the end of the poem gazing with rapt attention into the starry sky.

MASEFIELD

"All of life is material for his seeing eye and his thinking heart, as he makes the wonderful familiar and the familiar wonderful."
—Edwin Markam.

JOHAN MASEFIELD was born in Ledbury, Herefordshire, on June 1, 1878. Both his mother and father died when he was quite young and he was sent to live with an aunt. Even as a boy he gave evidence of a fondness for romance and adventure. At the age of fourteen he went to sea. For three years in the merchant service the impressionable lad sailed the seas, calling at many ports and seeing much of the world. He left the mercantile service in 1895 and, early in April, landed in New York with five dollars in his pocket, and, in his heart, a determination to write. He took up his residence in a garret room in Greenwich Village, the then famous artists' quarter of New York. In order to keep himself alive he worked at all sorts of odd jobs—in a bakery, in a livery stable, along the waterfront and, for a few months, in a saloon near Jefferson Market. While there he had the good fortune to be offered a position in a Yonkers' carpet factory. The salary of \$1.05 per day was sufficient to provide for his needs. For the first time he began to read seriously and by good luck it was Chaucer, most "modern" of older English poets, who captured his heart. He was attracted by the broad and deep human understanding and the racy narrative style which he found in his work. In 1897 he gave up his position, took passage home to England and, arrived there, determined to write seriously. He published his first volume in 1902. Since that time he has written and published a great deal. He has enjoyed a steadily increasing popularity, the latest token of which was his appointment to the position of poet laureate on the death of Robert Bridges in 1930.

Masefield has written much fine lyric poetry, but the work which has most captured the public attention is his long narrative poems. Of these, the most popular and finest are *Dauber*, *The Widow of the Bye Street* and *The Everlasting Mercy*. *Dauber* is full of the love and knowledge of the sea which forms so large an element in Masefield's lyric poetry. Indeed, Masefield's treatment of the sea is one of the most original of his contributions to our literature. In all his poetry and in his fine volume of prose, *Gallipoli*, a stirring account of the hopeless crusade of the early years of the Great War, there is a breadth of understanding of human nature that has made a great appeal to the reading public. The late Stuart P. Sherman (in *Books*, New York Herald Tribune) has paid Masefield a glowing tribute—

"This lean, sad-eyed master of song-craft, who has plowed Gloucestershire with oxen and the deep sea with ships, has given me more poetic pleasure than any other poet living. Through

his awakened personality, I have felt mighty rhythms pulsing through forms of life that dissolve and decay, through waves that break, fields sown and harvested, foiled tragic lovers, hot races ending with blown steeds and fallen horsemen, and forlorn hopes ebbing out in blood-drenched, frost-bitten trenches by the Hellespont. His glorification of the invincible vanquished stirs me, I confess, profoundly. It is the inside story of human life. He tells it with swift, bright speed, and yet with a pathos which bites to the bone."

A CONSECRATION

This selection stands as the introductory poem in the volume, *Salt-Water Ballads* and is so printed in Masefield's *Collected Poems*. Indeed, it is a dedication or consecration of the poet's work to the ignored, the ill-treated men, the "under-dogs" of human society. The attitude expressed in it arises out of Masefield's own experience. As a young man the future poet travelled a great deal, tramping on foot or sailing the seas in ships. He saw much of the "seamy side" of the tapestry of life. But he saw always through the ugliness and unattractiveness indications of the pattern of beauty of which this was merely the reverse side. In insisting upon beauty and significance where the ordinary man sees only ugliness and triviality, in emphasising the intrinsic worth and nobility of the under-privileged, the poor and humble man, Masefield has made a worthwhile contribution to the thought of modern poetry.

Page 204. — 9. **koppie**. Usually spelt *kopje*—a small hillock. The word is of South African-Dutch origin and came into English at the time of the Boer War.

Page 205. — 14. In a note on **chanty**, Masefield writes: "A song sung to lighten labour at the capstan, sheets and halliards. The soloist is known as the **chantyman** and is usually a person of some authority in the fo'c's'le. Many Chanties are of great beauty and extreme antiquity."

halliards. "Ropes by which sails are hoisted". (Masefield's note.)

20. **mould**. Earth; the common clay from which all men spring.

THE SEEKERS

Published in *Ballads and Poems*. There are several variant readings in different printings of this poem. The form used here is

that found in *Collected Poems* (Wm. Heinemann, London) and was chosen at the suggestion of the poet laureate himself. The reader may find it interesting to compare some of the variant readings.

The poem gives most memorable expression to the "wander lust" which was a common theme in Masefield's earlier poems and undoubtedly arose from his own nature. Compare *Sea-Fever*, *Tewkesbury Road*, *A Wanderer's Song*.

Page 206. — 9-10. We are seeking a far-off ideal, the city of God, and we find instead, all around us, the commerce and every day activity of life with its pain and sorrow.

CARGOES

In this brief poem, published in *Ballads and Poems*, there passes before the reader a pageant of the sea, its commerce and ships. Masefield's love of the sea is here. In addition, we see the power he had to give significance to the trivial and cast a glamour of beauty over the ordinary, even the ugly. The "dirty British coaster" is given a certain dignity as we find her in the procession which includes the galleys of Greece and Rome and the stately sailing ships of Spain.

1. *Quinquireme*. A Greek galley in which the rowers were arranged, five to a bench. All the details of the structure of these old ships are not known. The *trireme* was another type of Greek galley propelled by oars. (Latin—*quinque*, five, *remus*, an oar.)

Ophir. An ancient city whose exact locality is not known. It may have been in Arabia. The city was famous for its gold.

Page 207. — 6. *galleon*. Sailing vessels of the 15th Century and after. In later times they had a number of decks and were very large. They were used in war and commerce, particularly by the Spanish in their trade with America. It is all the rich associations of this trade that crowd into our minds as we think of the *galleon*.

DAVIES

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES was born in Newport, Wales, on April 20, 1871. His education was largely received in the school of experience. As a boy he was apprenticed to a picture-frame maker. When his apprenticeship closed, he tried farm work for a time, but soon left the British Isles and came to the United States. For some six years he lived the life of a tramp in America, picking up odd jobs wherever he could. He secured a position as hand on a cattle ship and made eight or nine trips to England. He was seized with a desire to go to the Klondike in the gold-rush days. Having insufficient money for the trip, he tried to "jump" a train, fell and was so badly hurt that he lost a foot. Following this accident, he returned to his home in Wales but soon determined to go to London and seek a career writing. Since that time he has published several volumes of verse and autobiographical prose. Practically all of his work arises out of the extremely varied experiences of his life. It is coloured with his intimate knowledge of the creatures of the wayside and the field. He looks at them with the eyes of a countryman. He does not indulge in much Wordsworthian philosophising about them, but presents them to the reader as the details of his every day life that he has found really significant and interesting.

RICH DAYS

The poem is filled with the delight a true nature lover finds in all the lovely things of Autumn. Note the simplicity of Davies' style. The poem is very different from the richly coloured pictures of Keats' *Ode to Autumn*.

Page 208. — 3-4. The suggested metaphor here is very effective.

7. pears that cheat our teeth. They are so ripe that they melt in the mouth, giving our teeth nothing to do.

THE KINGFISHER

The reader must remember that the English kingfisher, of which Davies is thinking in this poem, is one of the most beautiful of British birds. It is smaller than the kingfisher commonly known in Canada and the United States. Its plumage is so vividly coloured that, in rapid flight, it has the appearance of a brilliant jewel.

5. The kingfisher can always be found along quiet streams and by pools where it finds its food.

7. ff. The bird is so beautiful that it might rival the peacock. But it is shy and retiring, loving the lonely out-of-the-way places. This quality endears the kingfisher to Davies. He understands it and feels a kinship with it.

SACKVILLE-WEST

THE Honourable Victoria (Vita) Sackville-West was born at Knole, Sevenoaks, in March, 1892. She is the daughter of the third Baron Sackville. She was educated largely at home and through travel. In 1913, she married the Honourable Harold Nicolson. From an early age she tried her hand at poetry and had her verses published in magazines and in volume form. In 1927, she achieved a considerable popular success with a very beautiful volume, *The Land* which won for her the Hawthornden Prize.

Throughout Miss Sackville-West's writing, there are evidences of what she owes to her aristocratic background. Her poetry is full of beauty, but of a beauty that is never sentimental. It is above all sincere, never a pose, never an attitude. The love of beauty has come to her naturally, taken in with her earliest breath. It is the result of generations of contact with the finest and loveliest forms of English culture. It is a combination of refinement and strength and carries conviction to the reader.

FULL MOON

This is a beautifully coloured sketch, the details of which, suggestive of Oriental splendour transplanted to a Kentish lane, are most stimulating to the reader's imagination. The delightfully whimsical figure of the girl, irresponsible, and, for the moment at least, defiant and carefree, is most appealing. Whether Miss Sackville-West wished to do more than paint a picture is not quite clear. Certainly the poem is full of the magic power of the bewitching beauty of the moon to which men have paid homage these many centuries.

Page 210. — 2. Ispahan. A famous city, formerly the metropolis of Persia. In the 17th Century it was one of the largest and most magnificent cities in the world. Its artisans are still considered the best in Persia, particularly for all kinds of woven material and fine work in metals, glass and precious stones.

3. An exquisite bit of description, richly coloured and of exotic beauty.

4. coral-hafted fan. A fan with handle of coral.
8. Betelgeuse. A variable star of the first magnitude near one shoulder of the constellation Orion. It is believed to be very large. Aldebaran is a red star of the first magnitude in the constellation Taurus. It is the brightest star in the Hyades. These two stars have been observed by astronomers for centuries and their names give rise to rich associations in the reader's mind.
10. charlatan. Imposter. One who makes great and not always well-founded pretensions. The term is used here playfully to describe the girl masquerading in her Oriental costume.

DE LA MARE

"To me, of course, it is utter nonsense to assume that an imaginative piece of poetry is lacking in reality. An imaginative experience is not only as real but far realer than an unimaginative one."

From a conversation with de la Mare reported by Virginia Rice in *The Bookman*, Sept., 1922.

WALTER DE LA MARE was born at Charlton, Kent, on April 25, 1873. He is descended from a family of Huguenot extraction. His father was a church warden at Charlton and the gifted son was sent to the cathedral school of St. Paul's in London. There he gave evidence of his interest in writing: he organized and largely wrote a school paper called *The Choristers' Journal*. Leaving the school in 1890, he took a position as clerk with the Anglo-American Oil Co. There he proved a most efficient employee, remaining with the company for eighteen years. During this time he wrote and contributed articles and poems to the magazines. In 1908 he left the office of the Oil Company and, turning his back on "that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood", devoted himself to journalism. As early as 1901 he had published a volume of *Poems of Childhood*. From that time his poetry has grown steadily in popularity and he now ranks as one of the most gifted of contemporary poets. He has a very keen appreciation of the beauty of Nature, somewhat reminiscent of Keats. *Peacock Pie* contains some of the most beautiful and discerning children's verse in English. He may well be called the poet-laureate of Elfland. He moves with ease and naturalness in a faëry land of magic and mystery, and brings his fascinated reader to the edge of that other world which surrounds the material and physical.

ALL THAT'S PAST

This poem was published, as were *Nod* and *The Listeners*, in 1912 in the volume to which de la Mare gave the title *The Listeners*. In this lyric the poet has taken over a bit of the territory conquered by Science. He is a true child of the late 19th and 20th Century. Keenly aware (as who is not since Darwin?) of the vast age of the world, he sings of the antiquity of all that is past, allowing his mind to drift back through the hundreds of centuries that have flowed about the feet of Time. The poem, particularly the third section, suggests volumes in its brief compass.

Page 211. — 21-24. One man's life must seem very brief, little more than a moment, when we compare it with the "vast multitude of years" that the world has known.

NOD

In this poem we see the imaginative child-like quality which has made Walter de la Mare so skilful in the writing of poems for children. The reader who finds this bit of verse interesting will enjoy reading *Peacock Pie*. The poet here creates his own mythology to describe the coming of evening and sleep.

Page 212. — 1. Note how effective the first line is. The key note is really given in the first word *Softly*.

2. Notice the great beauty of some of the phrases — *twilight dim with rose, fleeces charged with gold, quiet steeps of dreamland, drenched with dew*.

5. Any one who has seen a flock of sheep moving along a road will agree that the verb *streams* has been most skilfully chosen.

9. *quick*. *Alive*.

17. *steeps*. *Hillsides*.

FAREWELL

This poem was published in *Motley* in 1918. The love of beauty is so urgent and compelling an element in the poetry of de la Mare that readers are immediately reminded of the work of Keats. You will find it interesting to compare this poem with Thomas Hardy's *Afterwards*.

4. Note the great beauty of this recurring short line with its definite cadence.

Page 213. — 5. *fare*. *Go*.

6. *proof*. *Experience*.

9-10. Walter de la Mare, like Hardy, often makes his reader feel how near man is to the dust from which he was created.

11. *these loved and loving faces* are the things the poet has cherished in life.

13. *rusting*. *Turning brown in Autumn*.

14. *Traveller's Joy* is the subject of the verb *entwine*, the object of which is *hedgerow*.

17. ff. Keats himself has expressed the frailty of beauty with scarcely more appeal than has Walter de la Mare in this lovely stanza.

THE LISTENERS

In the world of Walter de la Mare, the supernatural lies very close to the material and physical. A sense of this, blended with delicate melancholy, is to be found in much of his poetry. It is the essence of the poem *The Listeners*, the mysterious beauty of which is so fragile and elusive that the clumsy hand of the interpreter may well pause. The emotion evoked by the picture of the lonely traveller keeping his tryst, knocking at the door of the "lone house", and the phantom listeners conscious of his presence without there, but making no slightest response to his appeal, is strangely moving and will be felt by the reader, if at all, in a way which mere words cannot define or analyze. The poet makes no cheap or tawdry appeal to the belief or unbelief of the reader. He is not a propagandist for any creed. He has nothing to prove. Aware himself of the mystery of life and death, he conjures up before the mind of the reader a picture of compelling beauty and suggestiveness. As a companion piece in which the same inexplicable supernatural element is felt, the reader should turn to *The Mocking Fairy*.

1. Compare Colum's note concerning the first line of a poem. Walter de la Mare has certainly succeeded in his first line in creating the mood which pervades the whole composition.

Notice the very skilful way in which de la Mare makes his metre suggest the knocking of the traveller. In line after line of the poem the reader will hear the knock of the lonely traveller echoing through the "shadowiness of the still house".

2. Note the great beauty of phrasing. De la Mare, by the details of his picture, emphasizes the mystery of his theme—moonlit door, leaf-fringed sill, phantom listeners, quiet of the moonlight, faint moonbeams, etc.

Page 214. — 35-36. The concluding lines of the poem are as skilful as the opening line, and leave the reader straining to hear the last hoof beat of the traveller's horse.

APPENDIX

PSALM CXLVIII.

Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights.

Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.

Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.

Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created.

He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:

Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:

Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:

Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:

Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:

Let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.

He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the Lord.

SONNETS

LXXIII

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

—*Shakespeare.*

CXVI

Let me not to the marriage of true minds *a*
 Admit impediments. Love is not love *b*
 Which alters when it alteration finds, *a*
 Or bends with the remover to remove: *b*
 O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark, *a*
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken; *c*
 It is the star to every wandering bark, *d*
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken. *e*
 Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks *a*
 Within his bending sickle's compass come; *c*
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks, *f*
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom. *a*
 If this be error and upon me proved, *g*
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved. *g*

—Shakespeare.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

O Nightingale that on yon bloomy spray *a*
 Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still, *b*
 Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
 While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.
 Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
 First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
 Portend success in love. O, if Jove's will
 Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
 Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
 Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh;
 As thou from year to year hast sung too late
 For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.
 Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
 Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

—Milton.

ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF
TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
 Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!
 My hasting days fly on with full career,
 But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
 Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
 That I to manhood am arrived so near;
 And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
 That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.

Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
 It shall be still in strictest measure even
 To that same lot, however mean or high,
 Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven,
 All is, if I have grace to use it so,
 As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

—*Milton.*

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent
 Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
 And that one talent which is death to hide
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, lest He returning chide,
 "Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
 I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
 Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
 Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
 They also serve who only stand and wait."

—*Milton.*

SCORN NOT THE SONNET

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
 Mindless of its just honors; with this key
 Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
 Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
 A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
 With it Camoens soothed an exile's grief;
 The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
 Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
 His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
 It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faeryland
 To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
 Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
 The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
 Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

—*Wordsworth.*

<u>Monosyllabic</u> - 1	Monometer
<u>Disyllabic</u> - (Spondee - 11)	Dimeter
(a) Iambus - 1/	Trimeter
(b) Trochee - 1 -	Tetrameter
<u>Trisyllabic</u> -	(Iambic) Pentameter (Heroic measure)
(a) Dactyl - 1 - -	(Dactylic) Hexameter (Alexandrine)
(b) Amphibrach - - 1 -	Heptameter
(c) Anapaest - - - /	Octometer
	Caesura (Pause)
Extra unaccented syllable - hypermetrical	
Short an " " - catalectic	

Stanzas

Couplet - 2 lines - (a, a)	
Heroic) 2 " - (a, a) - iambic pentameter	
Tercet - 3 lines - (a, a, a)	
Quatrain - 4 lines	
(Heroic or elegiac) - 4 iambic pentameters a b a b.	
(Penssonian - In Mem) - 4 " tetrameter - a b b a.	
Octava Rima - 8 iambic pentameter a b a b a b c c	
Spenserian Stanza (Fairie Queen) - 8 iambic pent. + 1 Alexandrine (iambic hexameter) a b a b b c c c	
Sonnet - 14 iambic pentameter	

Shakespeare's life, dates, etc.
Sonnet (note at Back)
Breeding } of poem etc }

Act 1 Scene 5 7 1/2
plan
pg 12

Style - simple
- ornate
- grotesque

free verse - no fixed metre
blank - iambic pent (always)

- iambic
- trochee
- dactyl

- anapaest

- spondee

